

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. Cophright No.

Shelf . 14 Life

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









BEN'S ISABELLA

A NARRATIVE POEM IN THIRTEEN CANTOS







BUFFALO
CHARLES WELLS MOULTON
1895



TS 31/2 T4B4

COPYRIGHT, 1895, BY JOSEPHINE TYLER.

PRINTED BY
CHARLES WELLS MOULTON
BUFFALO, N. Y.





CONTENTS.

CANTO I.	AGE
Off Plymouth Coast	9
CANTO II.	
Love's Ideal	20
CANTO III.	
THE BALL	24
CANTO IV.	
ART DREAMS. A DREAM DISPELLED	30
CANTO V.	
Ben	44
CANTO VI.	
Empires in the Sky	62
CANTO VII.	
A Visit to the Inventor's Home	. 67
CANTO VIII.	
Ben Concludes the Lyrics of Tudor, John and Bella	78
CANTO IX.	
After the Mists	97

CONTENTS.

vi

CANTO X.	
Doña and Isabella by the Lake	101
CANTO XI.	
After Five Years. Seeking Soul-Gems. James Dun-	
BAR'S STORY. CRŒSUS AND SUSAN. VICTOR'S WORK.	
About to Revisit Ben	113
CANTO XII.	
FEEDING THE LAMBS	128
CANTO XIII.	
A FAIR VISION. A CLOUD-BURST. FIDELITY	149

BEN'S ISABELLA



BEN'S ISABELLA.

CANTO I.

OFF PLYMOUTH COAST.

R IDING in solitude through birchen woods,
Whose turf moss-muffled and o'erstrewn with
leaves,

Noiseless received the steps of my brown steed, I came upon a glade, and saw revealed. A sea-view splendid with the setting sun. Clouds shining like Heaven's pavement, in sky depths Floated above a wide breeze-fretted bay Of the Atlantic, where the waves were lone, Save that a merchant barque with sails full set, Far to the east was standing out to sea.

Some paces next along the beach I rode, Tuning my meditations to the chant Of waves that tabored 'gainst a neighboring crag, Then drew the rein, that in my happy mood I might reposefully absorb the scene—Sky, ocean, tide-dashed shore, all glory bathed. My horse, too, conscious of that glory's spell, Turned shoreward his arched neck, and seemed to gaze With wonder beaming from his burnished eye.

But while I rested rapt and motionless, I marked a sudden tremor of his frame, His ear erect, and nostril widely strained; Till at a changed direction of his head, I caught a vision thrilling as death's moan.

Against a granite boulder huge and gray,
Not twenty footsteps off, a maiden leaned,
Tall and with beauty dowered and soulful charms.
Poised in unconscious natural grace she stood,
With stature rounded to the mold of health;
Yet her broad brow lit by the sunset glow
Was drawn with pain; her hands in grief's tense clasp
Were raised and wrung; her dark impassioned eyes,
Wildly intense, were fixed on the fair ship
Sailing the restless waters, outward bound.

A sudden noise! perchance from fluttering wing Of sea-gull hovering 'neath the jutting cragThe maiden startled loosed her close-clenched hands, An instant drooped her head, with listening mien, Then noting not my presence, with quick step Glided to the near forest, and was gone.

Thus in an hour of peace, my consciousness Saw flitting like a veiled and guarded nun Before its gaze, a proud soul's hidden woe, And just a breath had served to rend its veil.

Late from the darkening shore my steed and I Diverging o'er a smooth, well-beaten road Of Plymouth County famed from pilgrim feet, Dashed by a score of scattered cottage lights, And sought refreshment at a wayside inn. Vainly we sought, the hostelry was barred. Where spend the night?

A villager who passed,
A sturdy man of cordial nature, asked
My quest, and bade me sojourn at his home—
A cottage near. His wife, a matron kind
And sensible, performed a hostess' part,
Spreading with willing hands an evening meal,
While the good husband to his stable led
My faithful horse, who whinnied at my call

From the near cottage-window, where I sat Waiting the supper, with sharp appetite.

When all was ready, at their cozy board I supped with man and matron, as with friends. Freely we interchanged our talk, told tales Of travels past, and ventured to propound Some simple questions, such as "Rode you far To-day, sir?" and on my part, "Have you none To share this home-life with you?"

To this last
'Twas answered, "Our niece only. She retired
Just ere you came, sir, being overtired
From a long ramble. She's a rare good girl.
'Tis pity you go hence at earliest morn,
And may not see her comely face, or hear
Her voice in song."

My sleep that night was sound Beneath the roof-tree of my stranger host; But as the day dawned, waking I lived o'er My vision of the maiden and the ship. Again I saw her gazing o'er the sea, Again I saw her shrink within the wood. But hark! a voice nearby subdued and sweet Came floating to my chamber. Thus it sang:

The sails of his ship have faded
Far in the eastern sky,
I have yearned o'er those mocking waters,
Without a tear or a sigh;
For I could not weep, if I willed it,
My heart is stilled in woe,
And pride that is folded round it
Has chilled my pulse, like snow.

Love's dread and bitter sorrow
Was once to me but a word;
Now it curdles the soul within me
And measures the nature stirred.
My spirit is deep as the ocean
On which he sails from me,
And rich as a mine in feeling—
He might have held its key.

Could he love, yet give no token
Save false ambition's sign?
I can see that Sorceress beckon
His being's course from mine.

Ah! when his white sails faded

From eyes that spurned the shore,
Hope sank like an orb resplendent

That bursts to shine no more.

Fain had I ventured to pursue the source
Of this strange threnode; save that conscience wrought
With certain guesses to forbid the search,
Scorning the subtle larceny that thieves
Within the privacy of suffering hearts,
Wresting slain, buried hopes, from out their crypts
For curious dissection.

Nor would time
Permit my lingering; for duty called
To swift departure. So my punctual host
Furthered my haste, with friendliness as true
As that which gave me welcome and good cheer.

I was a busy man in that past time.

My brain teemed daily with fresh reasonings

On codes and proofs; my heart with household joy

O'erflowed.

A wife was mine, my youth's true love, The pride and comrade of my manly years, The cynosure of all my social aims, Our children's wise instructress, central ray
Of our home's galaxy through many a year
Together passed since then. That ray, alas!
Some twelve months since, ceased in Time's sphere to shine,

And now invites my spirit's gaze more high Than earth's domain, toward bliss transcending far Our mortal joys-bliss emblemed here below In wedded love. Blest meanings seem to soar And sing about me, when I note the types Apocalyptic of supernal scenes: The marriage-supper, the appearing Lord, The Bride adorned, the Father's house prepared, The jubilates of adoring hosts— 'Till all that life has witnessed of home's love · And restful peace; of triumph, knowledge, gain, Achievement, exaltation, harmony, Seems but a picture on Time's narrow wall, A statue-group within her temple placed, A song or two by tremulous voices tuned, Designed to set forth Heaven in type and sign.

Now I have leisure, while the shades of age Gather about my path, to contemplate A thousand things my younger gaze o'erlooked. The culturing and growth of harvest fruits;

The ripe ingatherings after pains and toils;
The changes of the seasons, winter's deaths
And springtime's resurrections; the strict course
Of stars and mystic comets swerving not
Through their stupendous rounds one second's beat
From their celestial schedules;—all to me
Symbol intangible realities,
Or set forth prophecies in emblem-speech.

In what a school has heavenly Wisdom placed Earth's children, giving the inquiring gaze E'en to the infant, whose exploring hand Proves every substance to its clinging grasp Accessible: and to man's search mature Submitting things above, around, beneath! How to man's patience do the mysteries Of this great Universe unfold their scrolls! How do the elements of earth and air Become his ministers, yielding him food, Raiment, adorning! He experiments And broods o'er metals, magnets, resins, webs, When lo! there come forth prodigies of force To speed him on; trumpets from shore to shore Proclaim his murmurs in lone chambers spoken; Even his tones creep into waxen sheets To sleep and wake again; his smiles and frowns Are copied by sun-pencils; flame and heat Spring at his touch; and great lights, that portend Revealings of a final judgment's gleams, Rend midnight's pall before his ships.

The myths
Of Greece, fables of Araby, and tales
Of fays and giants spurning rules and space,
Which roused our childish wonder, yield the palm
Of strangeness to reality; and oft
'Tis asked, "Was dream or fancy yet but finds
Somewhere, somehow, its counterpart in fact?"

Through wit and studious research man cleaves
Into components e'en the unseen air,
Chaining each subtile gas. Prying, he finds
New continents teeming with myriad lives
Below the senses' ordinary ken
Hidden by minuteness marvelous. What realms,
What treasures may become revealed to him
Who reverent seeks instruction above gold!
To him the drill that penetrates a cliff,
And spade that digs a moat may become keys
Unlocking Earth's primeval registries
With fossil hyerioglyphics writ: The flints
That mar his roads may dainty agents prove

To speed his vision past sublunar skies,
And star-rays may turn whispers and reveal—
What stuff their worlds are made of, though 'tis well
Those worlds remain too distant to distract
The keenest gaze long from this orb of ours
With all its countless progenies and forms,
Its endless movement, changeful harmony,
And rich complexity of circumstance.

I find me here amidst this vast display,
A tiny flickering speck, yet sharing all
According to capacity so fit
For such a sphere, that it includes concepts
Of Time's long histories, and things to come
When Time is past; with sorrows that cry out
As deep to deep, and joys that climb the skies.
Naught comprehending to complete extent,
Yet apprehending God, my soul from out
Her fading tent peers toward unfading shores,
Nor doubts thereon her heavenly house to find,
When these flesh curtains fall. Often she sings
Songs of exultant and adoring faith,
With gracious foretaste of immortal peace.

A CHANT OF CONFIDENCE.

Cradled on the care divine,
Rest, believing spirit! rest;
All thy Maker's power is thine,
All His wisdom makes thee blest.

As the duteous stars in space, Poised along His circuits roll; So illumined from His face, Be thy stately ways, my soul!

Not for thee th' inconstant course,

Not its darkness, nor its wrath;

Where light streams from light's own Source,

Love shall gravitate thy path.

CANTO II.

LOVE'S IDEAL.

SOMETIMES, alas! my yearning heart reviews
In pensive sorrow those lost happy days
Lit by the brightness of a wife's fond smile.
Ah! then I prize that crowning gift—true love—
Above all earthly boons to mortals given,
Bond of pure hearts in Eden, and best type
Of Christ's redemptive favor.

Love! what power
Is in thy sway! Thy history is Man's.
Diverted like a stream from its safe course,
Thou hast spread ruin o'er the fairest climes,
Subtly removed foundations, and swept down
Broad fabrics of dominion wisely planned.
Thou, when corrupted, hast to artifice
Changed counsel and made heroes brave
Tremble and yield their swords to win a smile;
Nor less, when pure, hast made the weary strong,

And nourished states to honor and renown. Strong attribute of human hearts! Thy joys And griefs pervade the lore of every land. The lyre of ancient Greece is thrilling still From the impulses of thy deathless touch. From Dante's blue, indulgent native skies, To Scandinavia's maelstrom-guarded coast, Thy fancies fill the legend and the lay. From the rich music of our British harps, In sweet progression sounding down the years, Thy spell comes stealing o'er the hearts of men; It haunts the mystic verse of earliest realms, Whence the world's races wandered widely forth, Inspires the epics of the sunrise isles, Swerves the dimmed crescent in its languid course, And spreads 'neath grovey banyan and tall palm, A fitful influence tender, gay, or fierce. Its power that rent the heart of Priam's son, When the Greek snatched a Helen from his side. Moved the sad soul of India's Shah Jehan To rear o'er Noor-Mahal, once his throne's light, The wondrous Taj, noblest of burial shrines.

Mid Agra's cypress shades, thy pillars shine In melancholy splendor, Taj Mahal! Love's witness mute, yet unto melody So prone, that to the softest human sigh Tremblingly floating upward to thy dome, The spaces give back music.

Thus a heart

That long in silence yearned, at Love's first tone, Pours from its prisoned fullness swift response. Fair temple of the heart! in thee Love's sphere And prime intent are emblemized mid scenes Where Love has been most wounded and betrayed. Love's steadfast strength, engaging harmony, Her graceful blending of complex ideas, Her long remembrance and devotion rich, Her aspiration, purity, and peace— Speak from thy matchless walls, thine airy towers, Thy precious crypt and dome of radiant white. In full perfection of accordant parts. Thou seem'st an oracle on Jumna's banks Telling at dawn, or sunset's tender hour, Or clearest 'neath the glorious Indian moon, Love's prophecy to Asia's hearts and homes, For days that hasten down the slopes of Heaven. Nor speakst thou solely for the orient tribes; For many a pilgrim wand'ring over seas, Lured by thy story to old Agra's seat,

Returning shall recount afar the tale Of Jehan's love, and loss, and memory true, And listening mourners shall reply with tears, "So o'er a buried one as dear, as fond As Noor-Mahal, would I like tribute rear. Were this permitted." Some may be who note With changeless features what these travelers tell, Whose heart-throbs turned to whispers would speak thus: "As wrought the Shah Jehan with costly gems, In honor of a Light removed afar; So fervently my reft heart heaps and frames Its treasures—spoils of patience won through strife, Devotion's opals, pearls of tenderness, Sapphires of constancy, rubies intense Of fondness, crystals of bright sympathy, Mid cypress of pathetic loneliness— In memory of the far ideal I miss. I, too, can comprehend Love's loss."

CANTO III. THE BALL.

CLARA! my vanished wife—true love and friend,
Of thee was I reminded in soft hours
Of a bright summer mid New Hampshire hills,
When, as perchance I climbed some ruggéd pass,
I met young lovers hand in hand, absorbed
In fond communings; or perceived some pair
Long mated, sitting 'neath a leafy arch,
Restfully happy in confiding speech
Or sympathetic silence, their calm smiles
No fitful dawn-rays of an early spring,
But the rich sunshine of an afternoon
Of tried affection.

"Hail, such lot serene!"
I whispered, faring on my lonely path.
Sometimes, too, as I rambled in the wild,
I pondered subtle problems that perplex
Young hearts, no more, for my sake, vexing mine.
So an old seaman wand'ring on the verge

Of ocean may recall strange dangers past, Tempests encountered, wreck-strewn waves And marking, now and then, a ship off shore, Compare the tides and weather with its course.

Not for himself he fears again the blast, But yearns, for others' safety, to commend Tried rules of sea-craft to new mariners.

Returning from the wild, one evening bright
With orbs declaring glory, while fixed law
Controlled their changes intricate and vast,
I mused how method and precision mark
The Universe in all its cyclic modes,
Through all its measureless expanses, proving
One authorship, one will ineffable;
And reasoning from this premise plainly writ
On all the glittering pages of the heavens,
And traced in lesser characters around—
In floating mists suffusing balanced dust,
In circling dew-drops, and by measured winds
Whispered—I thence deduced how Peace attends
Alone on order, in all moral spheres.

But see! our mountain inn ablaze with lights, And gay with laughter, music, and discourse. Passing within, I rested half-concealed
Deep in an alcove of its central hall,
Closely observant of the showy scenes.
Maidens and mothers, youths and men of years
Drawn from the heated cities of our land,
To share the mountains' breath and rove the woods,
Had gathered to commingle in a ball.
Soft robes swayed near me, fragrance from pure flowers
Pressed to fair bosoms mingled on my sense.
In triple waves the slow waltz rippling flowed,
And lovely forms seemed floating on its tide.

There came a pause, when at my side appeared A slender maiden, with a pensive eye And rosy flush that woke within my mind Dear recollections of a modest glance, That in my early manhood was a beam Lighting my reverent way to sweet success.

The music burst, anew the waltz waves flowed, And as an iridescence from the clouds, Vanished my tender dream of other days. Close on the breast of a wine-heated man, Whose gentle wife within a distant home Sang to his babes grief-laden lullabys; I saw the maid, whose blush of tenderness

Should be a guerdon rare conferred alone
On a true lover's brave and constant faith,
Borne through the eddies of the whirling dance.
Wives too, from husbands were asunder placed
To lean on alien hearts and give a clasp
That should be consecrate to sacred trust
And love unchanging, for a like return
From the beguilers of that idle hour.

My brain grew hot, as when its early tides Had rushed tumultuous at first sense of wrong. Caution forgot to chide, though oft she seemed To say: "Beware, old man! lest thou misjudge The customs of this new progressive time, The lens of age fits not youth's guileles eyes." Uncurbed by wonted rein my speech broke forth On the surprised ears of a white-haired dame, Who came that instant toward my alcove seat. A wan-smile flickering o'er her hollow cheeks, Not warmer than the moon's ray upon snow, Vanished at my sharp tone; her thin, veined hand Touched her false puffs, then felt her frill of lace To find if aught offended there the mode, To which her shriveled taste and pinioned will Paid humblest tribute.

In her startled look

I read dismay, as though my anxious word—
"Madam, are we to sanction these strange ways,
Nor voice our protest?"—must imply some law
Of fashion slighted, some forgotten brooch
Or missing hairpin, leaving dreadful breach
In her array.

At length her timid voice Stole out beyond the music—"Pardon, Sir; What ways have thus offended? None, I trust, In such a place transgress 'gainst etiquette." "Madam, this sanctioned twining of strange arms, Tho' set to languid rounds of metred noise, Offends my soul. Dancing in our young days, Was, at least, civil, and the minuet Was courteous and stately. In those times, Caresses were Love's characters inscribed Not upon sign-posts in the market-place. Shall morning-dews be dashed by Impudence From Life's spring-buds, on whose unfolding wait The omens of pure love and household peace? Madam, I hold that e'en this visible frame Of our august existence is a shrine For reverent regard, where but its priests

Anointed by affection, whitely robed, Should closely wait beside its curtain-folds."

The dancers paused. The matron's sober gaze
Was fixed on mine, as, with a faint quick blush,
Reflection of past bloom, that once prevailed
Ere heart-throbs were repressed, she said, "Perhaps,
Your words are true. I used to speak the like.
But then, the young must have their pleasures, Sir;
Their social pastimes, ere life's burdens press."

"Still, let us call no pleasure good," I cried,
"That dulls susceptibility of soul
To best emotions, or perverts its sense
Of ideality, that in Life's spring
Is tender as the frail anemone.
I'd cherish fresh aromas of the May,
Ere strengthened fibre meet the August glare.

But can we call that social, which precludes All candid converse; or that pastime safe, Wherein a serious word would move dismay, Or play the clown's part of absurdity? Listen the trifles floated to our ears, Weigh them, if they have weight.

Pardon! Good-night."

CANTO IV.

ART DREAMS. A DREAM DISPELLED.

ANTHE! brightest of the stars that gleam, Paris, upon thy histrionic boards, Wearied with nightly twinklings to thy crowds, Withdraws her brilliance to our western clime, And gilds our mountain summits with her beams. Lo! senators and doctors of the law Deeply inclining raise obsequious eyes To win a ray of her defiant glance, While modest wives and studious girls admire Awe-struck, her manners, copying their art. The journals of our land of pilgrim sires Trace out her steps, as sages trace out suns; The press of Britain and of France contend Over her eyelids, as their armies sparred For conquest ere the reign of proud Queen Bess. Is not her stature draped as freakishly

As any chief barbaric decks his frame, Posed in each attitude that conscious art Assumes to simulate unconscious grace, Copied in galleries, enshrined in homes, And flaunted in the marts of every town, To lure the wavering fancy of our youth Toward the unquiet paths of her career?

She sojourns in our plain New Hampshire inn, Whose fame thereon is bruited far and wide. Quickly its halls by Fashion's hordes are thronged; Slim, perfumed youths, whose fingers ne'er controlled A tool more useful than a billiard-cue. Dash from swift trains, whose shrieks in Sabbath hours Shock th' astonished hills that shriek again, And chase Ianthe's shadow with a zeal That copies, as their feebler brains allow, The impetuous courage of their nobler sires, Whose careful toil in frugal early years, Won plenty's wreath to crown their honored age. How swiftly shall that rich parental crown Be rent and scattered on diffusive waves Of ease voluptuous, where nerveless limbs Untrained in sober Labor's honest schools. And guided by no firm instructed will— Sink in oblivion's deeps, to rise no more!

In youth I knew a score of college boys,
Whose fathers, by long search in Science's mines,
Had found fair trophies to enrich their race,
Or had attained of difficult Finance
The golden heights, and thereon set their sons,
Whose rising manhood ere full-orbed grew dark
And sank before Ianthes of those days;
As white Japonicas take on the shades
Of brown decay, before a passing breath.

Yes, more, I have known men of good renown, Who conquered stigma, braved a hundred wrongs, And dashed from Tyranny his iron crest, Who from beneath the bays a nation gave, Caught some warm glance from an Ianthe cast Amid the glare and witchery of her art, And faded like a star dimmed out of heaven.

Oft having heard a crash of ruined life,
And felt the tremblings soul-falls made around
My standing-ground, whence down th' abyss
That swallowed men I gazed with fear-strained eyes,—
Should I still calmly view such ruin's source—
Ianthe-worship?

No; 'tis as the cult
Of Montezumas in old Mexico,
That yearly pampered a well-favored youth
With all that sensual luxury could give,
Then cut his heart out at a twelve month's end;
So while its rites were fostered in our inn,
While August constellations lit the sky,
I sometimes sat aloof mid the parterres.
Here to my side would Victor love to stray—
A youth with genius gifted, whose warm soul
Sought vainly in the throng for kindred minds.

His fancy generous would fain have clothed All beings round him, from its plenteous stores, With qualities superlative, yet found That real lives oft cast aside in scorn His graceful webs, or wore them awkwardly.

Being untutored in mere artifice,
And having but his pale face and plain tongue
To match 'gainst flippancy and practiced wiles,
He gathered disappointment and dismay,
As souls like his are wont, ere skill is theirs
To clothe their dream with substance, of desire
To forge the resolution that achieves.

To him 'twas strange, as yet, when beauteous lips Failed to speak perfect sentiments, or praise The aspirations that infused his soul, While men of low ambitions were approved. 'Twas mine to probe his spirit with sharp words: "They but deserve defeat who search for pearls In surface foam. Let us not droop and mourn That peacocks will not lend us friendly wings To bear our bulk aloft.

"You covet ease papilios gay,

And fond caressing from papilios gay, Yet still would stalk with lions.

"Victor, Life

Has clear distinctions. Man must firmly choose, And choosing, must relinquish. They who grasp At all, hold nothing surely."

Thus I spoke
One eve to Victor, knowing his sad eyes
Pursued a beauteous creature, as she stepped
From a piazza, with a dark-faced man—
Julian his name, hers Madeleine. Her hand
Lay lily-white in Julian's swarthy clasp,

Her golden locks fanned by a gentle breeze, Gilded his shoulder, as they sauntered by.

Then came an artist famed, of noble soul,
His head downcast, who stumbling on me, cried:
"Ah! so, good friend, you leave the rattling halls
To watch the stars dance. Please you, I sit down."
"Welcome," I answered, "Victor will agree
You are most welcome. I philosophize
To this young man. Age has broad privilege.
Victor has stirrings to smite marble, Sir,
Till it takes on great meanings."

The famed man
Replied "That's well. Marble endures and holds
Great meanings long. And is our Victor sure
He has his meaning ready for the rock?"
"I dream Life has great meanings," Victor said,
"Yet Life's experience disappoints my dreams,
And leaves my hands too nerveless to carve stone.
Unhappily I can not write mere dreams
In adamant, I'd see them first set forth
In actual modes that still elude my quest.
I have an artist's feeling, but the brain
Of a mechanic, I must square my thought,

Use plumb-line of experiment, make sure With nail of fact, and screw of certitude."

Kindly the artist, like a healer spoke,
"Do not for this despair. In Art's true schools
There is scant space left for mere fantasies,
The day has dawned, when men have eyes to see
That Beauty dwells with Wholesomeness, that Harm
Is loathsome, Benefit forever fair,
Though often veiled. Who build unyielding towers
Need plumb-lines, proofs, and careful reckonings;
So they who fashion deathless things in Art,
Must follow changeless principles."

"Thanks, Sir,"

Cried Victor, "By your kindness I am bold To ask if ever plodding care gave birth To fiery eloquence or moving song, Or from the canvass or the stone evoked Enchantment?"

"Nay, I do but certify
Conditions that e'en Genius must obey,
Though doubtless oft instinctively, or fall
Trampled beneath the van-ranks of our time.
Meanwhile her meanings must transcend their rules,
As swift-wheeled motors flaming o'er their tracks,

Transcend their tracks. Her utterances now Must speak to hearts that yearn, and joy, or break, In any realm of this broad world of ours. Great motives taking hold on destinies That touch eternity must Genius feel, To reach to highest prize." The artist paused Reflective.

"It was ever thus, in truth," I ventured, "though our race was sometimes blind To grandest revelations. Righteous zeal 'Gainst tyranny, love, courage, worship, faith Are meanings that transfuse Art's noblest forms." "Aye, ever thus," he echoed, with full tone, "Her noblest forms were filled, yet meanings base Have won applause, where style was masterful To set them forth, and where the people's thought Was brutal or benumbed. But who now faints With appetite to witness a suttee, Or to see men vie with fierce beasts in strife? In sunset lands, where Art's new course begins, Men's hearts no longer gloat o'er carnage scenes; But admiration, when Oppression dies, Breaks into raptures. He who climbs henceforth To highest seats of Art, must feel strong hopes,

Must meditate great issues, mourn deep woes, Feel his own heart-strings draw in love or scorn, Express sweet joys of innocence, or strike Terror at Evil's infamy and loss. There must be sturdy fibre in the man Who reaches this.

Yon Julian who passed near
Some moments since, aimed high but missed the mark.
He had a soul-test that has left him charred,
Not seasoned yew tough for the bow-string's strain.
His wife, a gracious woman, loved him well,
And was beloved of Julian, Julian-wise;
But now they live disjoined by his self-pride—
A hedge where vipers nest and multiply."

Here Victor furious interposed "A wife! And he snares stealthily a peerless maid—I'll to the rescue, she shall stumble not Down the fell crater whence his hate has poured Destruction on a wife's peace.

Victor's hand
Will snatch the maid to safety, though a flood
Of malice scorch him from that crater's fires."

"Stay, stay," the Artist warned,
"Yon maid knows all,
But loves the crater's brink with Julian near,
More than the peaceful vales of Innocence.
Not every handsome creature feels disgust
At sulphur-fumes; some leave their villa-porch
Clematis-wreathed, and decked in roses pure,
To walk with villains in hot lava-paths."

"Can this be true?" groaned Victor, after pause, "Methinks I could be strong with chisel now, Carving a Tempter—not for fame or joy, But wrath. And surely there is room with Art For such a work, wrought with impetuous hand."

"My friend," the Master answered, "there is room For Genius speaking bravely from strong sense Of moral differences, room perchance For all impassioned honesty to speak In marble; but the chisel must be skilled That strikes this forth, the hand that guides it nerved With purpose having source in a deep soul Not used to counterfeit.

Greece gave us forms Faultless in poise and exquisite in grace,

Whose shape we may scarce equal, not excel, Whose meanings the attainments of our age Should far surpass.

Her Pan and satyr stage
Shamed her and shames its modern copyists,
Who reproduce such grossness, having eyes,
Yet seeing not what progress adorns Time,
Since Pallas wisest of the Grecian's gods
Sank with her Athens into long decay,
And from Egina's waves men ceased to gaze
With hearts of worship toward the Parthenon,
Hailing her image.''

Forth the famed man strode, Leaving us silent neath th' enduring stars.

Then flashed a falling meteor down the sky,
Paling the fixed stars with its fleeting glow
That dying left their tremulous fires undimmed.
Uprising, Victor cried: "Farewell, I go
At daybreak from these hill-tops to the town,
And from these dream-days merge to earnest hours."
"Be brave," I faltered, "steadily pursue
The old unvarying orbit of Good Will,
Nor flash in self-devouring vengeance flames
To ashes: thus your lot will shine serene
When meteors are extinct."

His hand seized mine,
Pressing it warmly—and he went to rest.
While yet his footsteps sounded on the walk,
A man dashed toward me, crying, "So one less
Among the stars! You saw it burst and sink?
Some tell us stars are worlds. Sir, I say no,
They're lights just put there to rule night, the sun
To rule the day. That's what the Scripture says
And quite enough for me.

"Let Science go,
I say"—here he sat down, grasping my sleeve,
"My boy went, Sir, to an Academy,
To please his mother, and he would run home
With nonsense about angles, arcs, and planes,
And say men measure stars and prove their weight
Immense, and that the best of them are suns.
My daughter went to boarding-school awhile,
And came back puzzling over poppy-flowers,
And weeds, and daisies, picking them to bits,
And calling them hard names; till I said stop!
Enough of this.

"I left off study, Sir, At twelve, when I could cypher, spell, and write, Then went to work and have worked ever since. My bank-accounts shows what a man can do Who keeps to business strictly.

"My girl Madge
Was courted by that lazy Victor, once.
'Artist,' she called him. Strange a woman thinks
These visionary youngsters worth a look,
I finished that affair. A pretty girl
Is Madge—her mother calls her Madeleine—
And dutiful, now that I've called her off
From weeds and nonsense. I shall marry her
To some good fellow who is shrewd at trade.
I have one such in view.

"Why, there is Madge Returning from a moonlight walk with—whom? Ha! Julian.

"No; it can not be my child Is roving with that wretch.

"Yes, yes, 'tis so.

I warned her of his ways, and promised her Jewels, gowns, anything, so she refuse His presence.

"I will hound them—but what use? She cheats her plain old father. Sir, I'm sick,

And these poor tears—you must not tell the world. I've hoarded riches for my children's sake, And my boy—Sir, I will confess at last—Defies me boldly, since he left the school, Gambling and racing, and forsaking work. But Madaleine, on whom my trust was set, Deceives her plain old father!"

So he walked Mournfully from me, shedding bitter tears.

If it be thine, O, Pain! to rouse his soul From a long servitude to sordid Greed By sense of wounded fatherhood, thy part Shall be angelic in its ministry, Though thou affright the captive striking off His chains, and leading him to freedom's light.

CANTO V.

BEN.

WHILE still sojourning mid the Hampshire hills,
As bright September used to cast the glow
And shade of her delicious afternoons
O'er the ripe landscape, I would often seek
My favorite seat, a moss-upholstered couch
Formed by the twisted and protuberant roots
Of two old oaks, whose boughs above my head
Loftily intermingled, while below
Their nether fibres knitted in the soil
Strengthened the hillside that supported them.
My fellow guests were won't to pass near by
Toward sites more distant, seeking dizzy views.
Often while musing in my solitude,
I saw their garments glinting through the leaves,
And sometimes yearned for fitting comradeship.

At length, one day, beneath the mated oaks, My heart was cheered by a congenial friend, Whose coming was an unexpected joy. *BEN.* 45

We had been college class-mates, Ben and I. Then he had settled northward, I to west Had journeyed, tarrying in a frontier State A year or two, ere to my native East Returned to enter on a strenuous course Of study, followed by a long career Of practice in the courts; and soon it fell That intercourse between us was at end. Ben says he toiled most sternly to surmount The steeps and tangles of his chosen paths, And found the way so hedged, the goal so far, He dared not turn aside to Friendship's meads, But pushed straight on.

With me capacity Found full employ through years of strength.

Of late

Retired from bustling cares and pensive grown,
Like housewife who recalls at twilight hour
Her children's pretty prattle and sweet looks,
The ways and speech of lately vanished guests
Marked lightly mid the duties that had pressed
At noontide, mindful, too, meanwhile
How daylight wanes and stars come forth on high;
So I would recollect life's common scenes

And summon histories that from long sleep Awake refreshed.

Oft had I asked myself
"What has become of Ben? He must have reached
Some shining point, with that aggressive brain
Curbed, it is true, by caution and reserve,
Yet charged with force like the electric storm's,
And waiting but some clear, far-reaching track
To be a highway for its energies."

I pictured, too, his tall and massive frame,
His eyes whose fire made ambush 'neath deep brows,
His noble head crowned with a raven wealth—
Till once when murmuring his familiar name,
"Strange!" thought I, "it finds counterpart exact
In that of the inventor, which of late
Goes ringing through the land! Can he be Ben?
If so, he chose no road prepared and plain,
But bade his genius hew its own Simplon."

While I was pondering thus, my ancient heart Gave a young bound; for 'neath the oaken boughs, My very Ben bearing the weight of years Not wearily, looked with no faded glance Into my eyes, and strongly grasped my hand! He said my name had sparkled in the list Of the sojourners mid his native hills, Like a lost gem he long had sought in vain, Now glistening close beside his daily path.

A breeze from new-mown valley hayfields blown To our retreat was like the balmy sense Ben's coming brought of gentle memories; And like that lowly landscape to our view Compact in distance, was the glimpse I showed Of past experience to my questioning friend.

Reminding him how I was early taught
By parents, whose example to their speech
Was as the coast well-measured to its chart,
To seek Heaven's guidance and prime tribute pay
To Being's Source, I told him that my heart
Restrained by reason from the trackless wilds
Where fancy roves unchecked, had early found
In Clara Raye a loving, well-loved wife.

Union in purpose, powers proportionate, Full confidence, and heart preference made Our home-life glad. Her prudence made my toil Effective amply to content our needs In days when fortune showed a wavering scale. But whether dollars were hard-won and few.
Or more abundant, as the years advanced,
For open worship and for private alms
We gave first fruits, spending in praise and prayer
An early fragment of each busy day,
And shared in hospitable ministries
Service and store, receiving unawares
Angel-like visitors; till home became
A tranquil Bethel in earth's wilderness.

Oft to our sons and daughters we rehearsed The lore of Holy Writ, its histories Of faithful lives, and prophecies that rise Like hill-tops that first catch the rays of dawn.

I spoke of all this humbly, minding well My inward failings and my frequent faults, Yet fain to witness to the faithfulness Of this sure Word: Who seeks Heaven's kingdom first Shall lack not common gifts.

This had we proved Dear wife and I, with love and plenty blest. Nor had our sons departed from our way, Though sadly tempted by corrupting wiles, In life's fresh years, and led to waver oft *BEN.* 49

Concerning those strong tenets whence ring forth Dread warnings o'er the waves where souls embark—Loud danger signals that must sound, or men Make shipwreck.

Now with steadfast eyes, my sons
Discern those lights that from the vast expanse
Of the eternities illume Life's sky,
Too high for creature hands to touch or change,
Yet for the guidance of attentive minds,
Sufficient, and in Revelation's chart
Laid down to guide the mariners of Time.
Ruled by these lights each steers his household bark,
Bearing on freight of love's unwithering fruits,
And gold of wisdom, for their fellow men.

"Your sons have households; does your daughter bloom Still 'neath your roof-tree, making gladness there?" My dear Ben questioned, dreaming not what pangs Pierced my fresh wounds, as I responded "No; She blooms on high, beside the mother-plant, Transported both to fadeless fields of bliss. But tell me kindly, to divert my thought From grief that stirs at recollection's voice, Some chapter of your past; or from your muse That sang soft numbers in our college days, Choose some refrain.

"Your vigorous brain equipped,
To search new realms, was like a huntsman armed
For quest of largest game; yet from whose belt
Hung a sweet bugle, that in restful hours,
Woke sylvan echoes with a melody."

Ben's eyes grew dreamy, then with inward beams They seemed illumined, as in low rich tone, He told this simple lay of youth and love;

BELLA AND TUDOR.

See you yonder little town
On the hill's breast nestling
Where the mountain stream comes down
With the mill-wheels wrestling,
Whipped amid resistance,
To enforced assistance,
Till ashamed of riot
More subdued and quiet,
Under drooping willows
Shading its white billows,
On it glides with roar subsiding,
'Mid the groves of Della hiding.

Fair the town with gardens green Bowered amid the larches, BEN. 51

Pleasant happy homes were seen Under elm-tree arches.

One such home was Bella's,
Fairest of fair dwellers.
Brown her eyes, with lashes
Veiling half their flashes,
Glossy locks seemed wreathing,
Classic beauty breathing,
en her twentieth summer brought he

When her twentieth summer brought her Love, and Love's first lessons taught her.

Tudor, youth from Georgia's clime, Brought his books to Della, But his heart that summer time, Studied only Bella.

Sang the oriole golden
In the pear-tree olden,
"Belle! Belle! Isabella!"
Tudor answered "Tell her
That I love her dearly."
"Love her! love her" clearly
Trilled the oriole upward steering,

As he walked to church betimes— Ah! the pious fellow—

Till in sunshine disappearing.

Tudor deemed the Sunday chimes,
Pealed forth "Isabella!"

Her sweet alto ringing
Seemed an angel's singing.
Close he watched the preaching,
Not to note the teaching,
But to mark its ending,
When her way attending,
He might catch the pleasure glowing
In her smile with joy o'er flowing.

Often when in garden bower,
Bella wandered seeming
Quite absorbed in vine and flower,
She was only dreaming.
Strange! from out the thicket,
"Tudor!" chirped the cricket.
Strange, too, and amusing—
Birds are so confusing—
That a bird should flutter
Near, each morn, and utter,
Eyeing her—the sly intruder—
"Tudor! Tudor! Tu-Tu-Tudor!"

Tudor had a gallant's art, Keen of apprehension

53

He could speak to Bella's heart,
By a pink or gentian.
John the sturdy farmer
Was not such a charmer;
Bashful, shy, and steady,
He was oft unready,
Though before some others
Praised by prudent mothers,
To his birthright fields devoted,
And for study somewhat noted.

To her grandsire's Bella went,
At the claim of duty,
And, ere half a week was spent,
Came a city beauty,
Tudor's cousin Ella,
To the town of Della,
And his hours beguiling,
Oft beside him smiling,
Through the green lanes walking
Set the gossips talking,
Till their rumor wildly flying
Pierced a heart in distance sighing.

Strange the letter white and fair, Folded o'er a locket,

Sent to her in grandpa's care,
In the inner pocket
Of his coat lay hiding,
While sad weeks were gliding.
Ere her late returning
Filled with grief and yearning,
Tudor had departed,
And she walked proud-hearted,
But no more the same glad Bella,
In the sere home-bowers of Della.

At the questioning farewell word
Left for her by Tudor,
All her jealousy was stirred,
Else had love subdued her.
Ah! how pride concealing
A hurt maiden's feeling,
Makes her seem uncaring,
Gives her strength and daring!
No one guessed how weary
Was the winter dreary,
How its winds sighed "Farewell!" only,
While the river whispered "Lonely."

John was steadfast, John was true, John would be contented *BEN*. 55

With a gentle word or two,
And her lips consented,
When he came renewing
His long baffled wooing.
Wherefore should they tarry?
He was fain to marry,
His lone mother needed
Bella near, he pleaded;
So ere early corn was springing,
Wedding bells were gaily ringing.

Now silence fell between us for a time, Till suddenly, as from a dream awaked, Ben clasped my hand, and rising turned to go, But I restrained him with entreaty.

"Stay,

The sun is high; your idyl was too brief. Surely your muse too cordially has sung To have grown weary of her theme.

"I'd hear
The echoes of those festive Della chimes,
E'en to their last refrain, here mid these hills,
Where sound melodious is not broken off
Like the dull thud of counterfeited coins,

But in and out among the rocks and pines Reverberates and winds.

So let your words
Prolong that village music in my thoughts."
He gravely smiled, then from his vesture drew
Some folded pages.

"I've been scribbling here, Of late," he said, "but my once daring Muse, After a rest of years, has grown so shy, Like novice first before an audience placed Who stands on either foot alternately, Now on one metre, first, her blushing weight, On other next she rests. Small faculty Has she to clearly sing the ample score That stands complete before my spirit's eye. In varying rhythm a fragment, here and there, Is all she dares attempt, and for this hour Sings only the 'New Problem' for your ear."

THE NEW PROBLEM.

SCARCE conscious of his fulness of content,
John watched the tranquil Summer strew his plains
With golden increase, till her time was spent,
And mild September breezes shook the grains.

BEN. 57

Problems of Science, when the farm's demands Were simplest, mid the leisure of dull days, Would fill with strange experiments his hands, And lead his thoughts in theoretic maze.

Dear was the sight of mother and of wife

Beneath their roof, at morning, noon or eve;

They were eachother's now, henceforth for life,

For aught beside, why should they yearn or grieve?

Still, youth was seed-time, and he willed that age
Should find his mental garners richly heaped;
As those broad barns that were his heritage
Appeared when harvests had been freshly reaped.

He watched the course of stars, he gaged the tide, He noted matter's laws, with care intent; Yet studied not the spirit at his side, Nor marked the signs of sorrow imminent.

His trustful heart, where Bella was adored Too truly, too profoundly for remove, Was to himself a province unexplored, Till anguish cried within to slumbering love. 134

One day his mother sought him in the field
Apart from all; fear from her streaming eyes
Looked forth, as tremblingly her voice revealed
A grief, whose stress the sufferer shares, or dies.

"Alas! my son, rouse thy poor heart from sleep,
To shield the honor of thy house from foes,
See, down you vale, her tryst not first to keep
Thy faithless wife, with stealthy footstep goes."

She ceased, and pointed 'neath a fading bough,
Down a steep hill-side, where a mounted man
Leaned from his saddle toward a woman's brow,
As though in speech their hearts commingled ran.

'Twas Bella's scarf that in the fickle breeze,
Touched a strange shoulder in the lone ravine,
While son and mother through the upland trees
Gazed like chill statues mutely on the scene.

Han.

Not like swift ripples of a shallow stream
John's purpose wrought; but slowly as the wave
Swells on a wide shore neath the moon's sad beam,
While pallor spread upon his features grave.

BEN. 59

The world's perplexing vast machinery

Seemed wildly whirled—somehow he must be caught

Between the shaftings—crushed? or if 'twas she?

Then to the rescue! coolness! courage! thought!

"Hush! mother, make no sign, this is your hour To do us kindness; for my sake, be still." Firmly he turned her back: she took her way, And left him silent on the sheaf-strewn hill.

A half-hour later, at their evening meal
The three were gathered, Bella cold and white
Revealing nought her inmost heart might feel,
Though starting at a passing horseman's flight.

Then first John saw how wasted was her cheek, How self-absorbed and anxious was her air, How her lip quivered when she tried to speak, As though her mind took hold upon despair.

The moon was veiled in restless clouds of gloom,
The mother sought her couch and Bella said:
"Your problems thrive best in a vacant room,
I, too, will seek a pillow for my head."

John sought the outer air, though wild winds rose
And roared through woodlands near, and smote his
frame;

The long dark watches brought him no repose, Nor dawn that surly o'er the mountains came.

His nature stood aroused in wondering awe
At its own peril-ravaged wide domain;
'Cosmos,'* nor 'Mécanique Celeste'† gave law
Of guidance to his pressed and wavering brain.

Life's ground seemed rent before him; what soul-skill Should viaduct the chasm-before his feet, Or smooth the jutting crags, the valleys fill, And plant the slighted blossoms once so sweet?

Self's tactics can not fully engineer
Paths for a man's heart o'er a cleft like this:
As Roebling's art his causeway could not rear,
Save as a wife's eyes kept their watch with his.

How dark the mountain-passes! sudden lowers The thundering cloud, while on my poet's brow

^{*}Humbolt's "Cosmos"

tLa Place's Mécanique Céleste.

The wife of Engineer Roebling assisted him in carrying forward his grand plans of the "Brooklyn Bridge."

BEN. 61

Lowers the deep shadow of his reverie, Through a still moment.

Then he wrings my hand,
Starts up, shoots down at me one falcon glance,
Cries "Tom! you'll seek me at my highland lair
A mile due east, by yonder forest road,"
And plunges swiftly downward and away.

To westward, leaning on my sturdy stick, 4 I hasten mindful of the sounding skies.

CANTO VI.

EMPIRES IN THE SKY.

WEARY I reached the sheltering halls where swarmed My fellow guests.

Soon thence with awe we watched Forked lightning blades cleaving the roaring skies.

Hushed by the terrors of the storm, each soul Within itself interpreted its voice.

Near me, on a low seat, a mother cowered, With three bright little ones about her knees. Her beauteous eyes uplifted in alarm Betrayed a Romance lineage; her hands Burdened with glittering circlets, clasped a cross, Whence rubies shot forth their mysterious fires.

While rapid bolts pealed loudest, as from shock Of planets shattered into asteroids. She moaned petitions in the Portuguese.

This was a high-born lady of Brazil.
Her husband honored by that government,
A leader of its commerce on high seas,
Was of New England blood, reared on the coast
Where Pilgrim feet first rested from long flight.

Our guests called her the "Doña," with round eyes Watching her movements, though in shy constraint; Save that some few had ventured, now and then, To seek her notice, bowing as she passed, Saying "Good Morning, Princess!" or "Good Night!" And tendering compliments, or converse kind. Among these was a singer of fond lays, With tenor voice, a slim and dainty man, Who used to overtake her in her walk, Or lend his hand upon the stairs—a Don, 'Twas said, with proud estates in Spain.

She heeded none on that tempestuous eve, Till all the trumpets of the clouds were still.

Then saw we vapor pictures in the sky. First darkly spreading, with huge outlines dim, Suggesting structures of Antiquity. Vast pyramids appeared, and pylons broad Guarded by sphinxes, hinted Egypt's fanes.

Some seraph Watt seemed with his brush unseen To symbol Karnak on the gloomy vault, Then blotting this design, to trace towered walls With gates of bronze, where winged lions crouched. Gardens were seen o'erhanging palace-walls; Rich Babel grandeur flashed an instant forth, Looming in purple vistas vague and far, Till melted in a sea of flame and blood. O'er this was spread a haze of tender tint; Then Tyrian galleys seemed to toss on waves, And wreck themselves against a lofty coast, Where lifted on a stately portico, Athena's image gleamed, and lessening heights With temples, forums, theatres, were crowned.

Swiftly this shadowy classic scene dissolved To vaporous elements, whence rolled to shape The likeness of Rome's eagle huge, whose wings Hovered o'er porches grand, high capitols, And amphitheatres, that, while we gazed, Broke into floating arches pearly white, Within whose vista seemed a feathered throne Glittering to symbolize the Mogul power Dissolving.

Next a dragon-head glared forth
Beneath a seven-roofed shrine, that toppling merged
Into a proud pagoda glistering
With crests of gold; this moving into shade,
Left for an instant's glance a dreamy mosque
With crescents shining over minarets.

Then were the scattered vapors fused and blent Into one cloud, that with strong impetus Advanced to meet a brightness from the west Breaking, till all its colors were suffused In that new glory flooding earth and skies.

Nor rose succeeding cloud-types on our sight.
Emblazoning the heavens with empire-signs;
Nor marked I how the last fair beams declined,
Till day had passed to dawn on orient climes.
Long musing I recalled the chronicels
Of fallen empires mighty in their prime;
And present realms now shaken to their depths
Reviewed, discerning, amid baseless shapes,
Pillars well-grounded in eternal Right
Now here, now there, rising amid wrecked wrongs,
With capitals glowing in beams of Truth.
Hailing these tokens that our living Christ

Bears on His shoulder still Dominion's key,
And resting on His word of promise sure—
"I come again," my soul swelled with a joy
Deeper and nobler than my youth e'er knew
Or could have compassed, ere the scope and strength
Of consciousness enlarged through thoughtful years.

CANTO VII.

A VISIT TO THE INVENTOR'S HOME.

HEN next I wandered forth, my heart grown young, Impelled my footsteps toward my early friend. O'er the broad land, the late September poured Its liquid bronze that filtered through tall oaks, Maples and elms, upon my lonely path. Sometimes an ash contrasted its soft green With the dark pines; or poplar's sheeny leaves Quivered like ruffles o'er a maiden's heart, In the light breeze that swayed no sturdy bough. Some autumn colors flecked the full-leaved trees—Gold, red, or brown, since now and then, a chill Had in the night-hour fallen.

Round my feet Sprang spicy mint, and brake with juicy root Sought by the school boy, when his appetite Wakens upon the homeward way from school.

Close on the forest, where a winding road Nears a low bridge, that spans a singing brook Flowing from upland meadows, on a knoll
Stood a plain school-house, whence young voices rose
Mingling their tune with the stream's melody.
The singing waters chanted toward the sea;
But toward eternity the children sang.
I paused to listen at the open door,
And saw—a bright-haired wood-nymph? Ah!
A gentle teacher with small hand upraised
To guide the measures.

With ingenuous smile, To my obeisance low she bowed reponse; When hark! the music flagged, and each small head Golden or brown was toward the stranger turned, And curious all surveyed me.

So I fled.

Leaving the fair young ruler to restore
The harmonies of her distracted realm,
Yet murmuring with myself "A pretty guide!
But have her girlish powers the master-grasp
For tasks so grave as to start human thought
On its life quests, equip mind for Time's wars,
Curb the expanding will? Can this wood-nympth,
Do such exploits?"

Viewing the scalloped prints

Of little feet impressed upon my path,
I felt a rising dread for youthful lives
So soon to meet the rush of perilous years,
Till by the wayside wall of boulders brown,
Astor and golden-rod, red cardinal flower,
And clustering sumac laughed upon my care;
While starry-mayweed from the narrow strips
Of turf between the tracks of wheels illumed
My trust in Him who bade it shine just there,
Who taught the locust sound, the bee her skill,
Gave to the toad clear vision and quaint mien,
Commissioned bright-winged birds and butterflies
To glitter o'er me through the wholesome air;
Yea, whose deep wisdom taught the very ant
Art, order, and affection for its kind.

A carriage dashing o'er the rustic bridge, A glimpse of silver trappings, two swift bays, Bright liveries, and the Doña's flashing eyes! Beside her sat her husband, with blonde locks And russet beard, a tall and stalwart man, Who to their little ones around them grouped, Pointed the features of the rural scene.

Dust rose along the highway, as they passed, Its slight, thin column strangely glorified,

When the sun smote it in an open place, Where meadow-lands spread out beyond the wood. If sunshine thus transmutes the lowly soil, Why doubt of spirtual alchemies?

I saw the carriage slowly climb the hill
Crowned by the mansion of my early friend,
The famed Inventor, and beyond the gate
Vanish, some moments ere I gained the slope,
And, aided by my staff, trod joyfully
A smooth broad walk that led me to the porch,
Here standing in his doorway, with a shout
Of hearty fellowship, Ben greeted me.

The house o'ershadowed by two giant elms,
Was partly fashioned in colonial days,
By a wise Pilgrim of Will Brewster's sort,
Who loved ideas above display or mirth.
From sire to son it fell, till the brave heir
In freedom's contest fell at Bennington.
His grandson and great grandson led pure lives
On the home-acres herited by Ben—
Rich cultured acres spreading on all sides
About the house, which each successive heir
Had amplified, while stirring not a stone
Of first foundations.

On the corner blocks

And central chimmey-tower was graved the date Of founding, and within, on cross-beams broad And mantle-frames of solid oak were carved The name ancestral, rimmed with oaken leaves.

At first we sat within the jasmined porch, I spoke of the fair Doña, told the tale Of her far birth and union with a man Of Massachusetts noted for his deeds Of enterprising commerce in south seas, Their name repeating in the garrulous style Of age.

"I saw them as they passed," said Ben;
"And now I think upon it, I recall
The man—a native of the Plymouth coast,
James Dunbar, Philip Dunbar's eldest son.
I saw him down near Plymouth, ten years back—
No, nearer twenty, at my sister's home,
And prophesied for him a strong career.
This leads my mind back, Tom, to troubled times,
When these home-lands were mortgaged, and my girl
Was dwelling with her loving only aunt,
And teaching village children how to read.

Young, but wise, she cheered me to achievement, Smothering for my sake, the sole sharp grief She knew—a mother's loss.

Now I can call

This freehold ours; old helpers are returned, And my sleek cattle feel no alien's lash.

But come, and scan with me our household haunts, The ancient rooms my fathers framed, and nooks But lately added, as our fancies craved."

We passed together through the square great hall Ben called the Summer-room, whence stairs arose In varied angles, fenced by railings prim. A stately English clock three centuries old Ticked at their base.

A parlor on the right

Was beamed above, and wainscoted around,
A glass-doored buffet filled with china thin
And rare graced the far corner, and above
The carven mantle, from a deep recess,
Brass candlesticks and silver tankards gleamed.

Across the hall, an ample "keeping-room" Invited rest upon its wide arm-chairs, Their feet like lion's claws. But on we walked

Through the long dining-room and buttery large, That smelt of richest cream. The kitchen wide, In which we peeped, held tables of white boards, And shone with tin.

From its stone chimney-place, As from a cavern, smiled a dusky maid, In shy and curious surprise. She hung A chain of corn-ears joined by braided husks. On pegs for drying in that warm recess. A swarthy matron from an oven arched Within the wall beside the chimney, took With holders gay, a steaming loaf of brown. A dark male servant at a sounding churn Turned toward my host a glance of fond respect. Each won from Ben a brief approving word, Ere we went on into a bright-hued room Within a modern portion of the house, That seemed to speak some cheerful presence near— Or was it that the flowers from field and bed Clustered upon the window ledges, breathed In subtle fragrance such a pleasing hint?

Ben smiled to see my questions in my face, And might have answered, but such chatter rose Above us, as at first precluded speech,
Then merged into coherent utterance
That half betrayed the secret of the room.
A brilliant parrot from his cage high hung
Amid fresh blooming plants shrilled cheerily
"Good morning, Isabella! Papa! Sir!"

Glancing at various pictures on the walls And some unhung, fresh from their painter's brush, I cried "A studio!"

"Yes and boudoir,"

My dear host said, "I may as well admit—I'm somewhat proud to have an artist child. Here near this window hangs her likeness, Tom, Beside her mother's; here's her violin, That's wont to feel the motion of her soul Thrill from her hand along its answering chords. And here's her light guitar, companion oft Of woodland wandering, when she takes it forth, And to its strains, by lake, or rock, or stream, Sings tender ballads learned in childhood's days. She's sketching somewhere now among the hills.

Sometime, when feeling suits her and your will, She'll sing you gentle songs her mother sang. My child loves, too, the grand old music, Tom, That moved our souls in youth, which has rung on From voice to voice, since Mozart caught the pitch From Asaph's choir, and Handel, Haydn, Bach, Swelled the world's scores with harmonies that lead The reverent spirit captive through the depths Of holy awe, or bear it up the heights Of praise, to catch the themes of seraphim.

And now come with me up these winding-stairs Of this new tower o'erlooking many a mile. Here is my workshop; here you see my books And instruments, and tokens of success Attained by pioneering some hairs' breaths In the advance of others, who, like me, Sent forth conjectures to pre-empt new fields In Law's domains, where use may take on wheels, Relieving human shoulders from old loads."

I had pursued him rather haltingly
In step and hearing, since I gained a glance
At those fair portraits in his daughter's room—
Her mother's and her own.

Deep tenderness, With calm and thoughtful earnestness suffused

In quiet gladness, in the former seemed To blend their quality with some past view Of features in the second picture traced. Some strong impression played coquettishly With memory, refusing to be won.

At length, o'ercoming my abstraction, glad At heart for all the blessings of my friend, I freely quaffed the stream of fellowship.

From a high circling window of the tower, He, for my notice, culled the choisest views; Then talked of his experiments, and showed The use of apparatus intricate, Wherewith he hunted nature's secrets down, Or led them captive, with a zest more keen Than that of sportsman in successful chase.

"'Tis a brave sight," I answered, "this array Of tools and lore pertaining to a realm Whose fruits I taste, but can not cultivate. I like to witness how you hold the plow, And sow, or reap on scientific fields. But now I'm sentimental in my mood, And want a love tale.

Tell me more, I pray, Of "John the sturdy farmer" and his bride, And how the problem of his heart was solved. Found he in its solution peace or woe?"

CANTO VIII.

BEN CONCLUDES THE LYRICS OF TUDOR, JOHN, AND BELLA.

THUS pressed, Ben seized the rhythmic warp and woof

He late had woven beneath the mountain oaks, But left unselvedged: thereunto he joined In new designs of numbers, skeins of thought, Whereby the fabric of his web became First, Bella's answer to her husband's prayer For her full confidence; then John's response, And Tudor's parting witness and farewell.

BELLA, JOHN, AND TUDOR.

John's life wore on in wretchedness and fear, And Bella made no sign of peace or cheer. Slow, silent, sad she moved from room to room, Through days wherein the skies were wrapped in gloom. But once when sunbeams broke through clouds of storm, And mount and valley in their smile grew warm, They saw her wand'ring toward the trysting glen. Late thence with wavering steps she came.

'Twas then,

Though crushed with ceaseless agony, John strove
To burst her bondage by the might of love,
And share her care, from whate'er source it came,
Whether distrust, infirmity, or blame.
"Tell me thy grief, my only love, my bride,
Fear not thy burden fully to confide;
Though weakness, trial, even fault be thine,
No heart can yield thee pity more than mine."
She shrank a moment, at his words amazed,
A moment on his grief-worn features gazed.
Then o'er her marble face a rosy flush
Stole tenderly, and tears began to gush.
Long time they flowed, but when her sobs had rest,
Without reserve her burden she confessed.

BELLA TO JOHN.

Strong is thine hand on my own; but thy voice has its tremor;

Wells are thine eyes, though I once deemed them shallow of feeling,

Lonely I came to the glen, not for Tudor—that's ended.

Tudor has long tryst with Death, in the house of his kindred,

Yonder its white gable gleams through the trees of the roadside.

Now as thy footstep approached, and thy voice smote my sad ear,

Bidding me speak of my ways, I divined in a thought-flash,

"Some one has peered out my steps in the weeks that are closing,

Some one has mingled a potion of gall for thy drinking." Fury arose in my bosom, where bitterness rankly

Grew in the spaces thy care had neglected to nurture.

Fury, the serpent sprang forth from the weeds of resentment.

Lo, thou hast smitten him low, with love's lightning outglancing

From brows where I deemed that for me were stormbolts of thunder.

Yes, I will lay at thine ear all my secret; it may be Rest, long a stranger will steal to my side, for a season.

Mine is a nature that bounds with full strength to decision:

- Having misjudged my young lover, I harshly renounced him.
- Mine is a conscience that clings to its bond, though that slay me:
- Having wed thee, my will ever was loyal to thee, John: Having met only neglect, I esteemed thee unloving.
- Thou wert a sage self-possessed; I a pride-wounded woman,
- Thus once at nightfall I strayed in the graveyard of Della.
- Musing how neither the loves, nor the griefs of the sleepers
- Roused their swift heart beats again—hark! a step, it was Tudor's.
- Wan was his cheek with disease—'twas but hectic that flushed it,
- Trembling had seized on my frame, at the stroke of his presence.
- Now came a funeral train bearing mourners and gossips.
- "Meet me," he whispered in pleading and hoarse words, "just once more,
- When the moon shines, in the vale by the cliff near the willows.
- I have a story to tell, ere I die, and a favor

Meet for thine ear and thy granting, though thou art another's."

Swiftly he vanished, his plea roused my heart to repentance.

What if my error had slain him? I felt as one dying Bearing blood-guilt on my soul, without peace of remission.

Eager I rushed by the moon, to the glen of the willows. There as a priest Tudor stood, stayed my life, that had parted

Under his blame, with the healing of frank words of pardon.

Balm for his hurt there was none, though he came, at my asking,

Twice to the vale by the cliff, where I strove with wise counsels,

E'en at the borders of death, to set purpose before him. Idle my task. At last parting, life's tide drops were oozing

Forth from his lips. He lies low in the house of his kindred.

Woe that for him Time is all, with its idols and shadows!

Woe that for him the death-shades are the shroud of the spirit!

Shone there not through my pain's gloom, stars of mercy eternal,

Sending their rays from beyond, I had perished in silence. So have I broken the seal of my sorrows and Tudor's.

"Thanks for these pages, Ben, that, like bright blades,

Sever suspicion from your heroine's fame.
And still you leave me eager; tell, I pray,
What said the husband to the candid wife.
Did jealousy possess him, like a fiend?
'Tis strange how these creations of your muse
Flit in my brain among true histories,
Perplexing consciousness with likenesses
And hints, till she grows ready to accept
Their shapes as substance. Added elements
May by thought's alchemy resolve my doubts
To clear perceptions. Let me listen on."

The white leaves quivered in the poet's hand, And o'er and o'er he turned them for awhile; Then read the husband's answer to the wife.

JOHN TO BELLA.

Thy sorrow be mine, and thy burden, Earth has not for me joy or guerdon Remote in my purpose from thee. Thy heart is a citadel shaken; Admit me, it ne'er shall be taken, Thy husband its safety shall be.

For this, this alone, be my chiding,
That thou didst withhold thy confiding;
Thy husband alas! is no seer.
He failed, for his insight is human—
To read the deep soul of a woman;
Forgive him, as he forgives, dear.

If sadness nor danger were near thee,
What merit to shield, or to cheer thee,
Or hear thy glad songs with delight?
To sigh with thy sighing were better,
To rend from thy soul every fetter,
And gird thy true purpose with might.

The love of thy girlhood is dying, Thou weepest, repress not thy sighing, Less tender, less lovely thou wert;
My heart lately torn, comprehending
All anguish, shrinks not from befriending
A brother, whatever his hurt.

Lead me, then, where Tudor is lying,
I go to the bed of the dying,
My vigil to keep at thy side.
Haste we to illumine with kindness
The way he is passing in blindness—
We three in one furnace are tried.

My poet pausing, from my heart surcharged Flowed approbation for his hero's part. "Alas!" I cried, "that husbands are so few Who, like your John, are wise to apprehend And zealous to prescribe for ills of heart, Though skilled toward lesser maladies, in those To whom they promised comfort till death's hour. Griefs cankering to despair might oft find cure, If beams of loving candor o'er them fell. Shame on that heart of man which nurses hate, Nor risks a wound, that it may foil a dart, Or break a spell against home's priceless peace. Your scholar, Ben, found no such recompense

Attendant on his algebra, I ween,
As when he solved that unknown quantity
That formulated a wife's deepest grief.
I prophesy the sequel of your song,
Was growing happiness and lasting love.
I wait your closing stanzas with charmed ears.

Shades lengthened o'er the hills. Ah! day by day, The heavens and earth in changing hues and shapes Befit the changing story of man's life. No scene remains, but flits or glides apace, While frail humanity acts out its plot.

The part of Tudor seemed to suit the shade Of the great evening curtain as it fell, While Ben invoked his image, as he told The dying chant of Tudor to his friends.

TUDOR TO HIS FRIENDS.

HARK! gentle friends, the tolling burial knell Will echo soon for me a last farewell. Yet first, my weakening accents would confess My strengthening joy, my growing thankfulness.

Mirth ruled my careless mind in earlier days, Things near and glittering filled my eager gaze; Till love awoke to prove my spirit's might To feel.

One rapid summer of delight
And one long year of anguish made me great
In knowledge of man's saddened human state.
The potency of feeling over clay,
And that we live or perish from its sway,
I learned, nor deemed the learning worth my test,
To solve one doubt remained the only quest
That promised slightest solace for my mood,
What if she never truly understood?
I'd know the truth from her who once made heaven.
I gained my quest, forgave, and was forgiven,
Then murmuring at the mystery of breath,
Sank helpless toward the mystery of death.

John came—the "gift of God," and witness bore To fadeless hopes by me undreamed before. The constant shining of his spirit shed No transient sparks self-kindled round my bed.

Skilled, through my stern experience, to prove The source and elements of earthly love, I traced his motives toward an origin More high and strong than I could find within My cold proud soul, that, as a prism, caught Their halcyon rays to analyse in thought. Faith, reconcilement, patience, love were shown Rays from a sphere high as creation's throne.

I yearned in me such heaven-shed peace to feel, Till from the Sun of Truth it fell, to heal. As John, the herald of Messiah—"God's grace, In deserts showed th' Anointed to his race; So to my soul that knew no helper near, This John has made its Light, the Christ appear.

Grieve not that once I suffered, thus to know The noblest friendship man can share below; Grieve not to see this outward death begin, For Christ, the hidden Life expands within.

"Thus ended Tudor's witness, as his soul
Set forth exultant on the wings of hope.
His mourners laid the empty clay to rest
'Mid Della's graves, and sang a song of Heaven—
That higher Heaven, whose beams thenceforth have seemed

T' infuse the visible skies above that place, While there the soft-robed songsters of the groves Sing not of mortal, but eternal Love, To us who visit Tudor's grave—and hers."

"Ah! Ben, say not that Bella wept out life Because of anguish—"

Gently answered Ben, While his eyes sought the first clear evening star, "No, not from grief she died; though life was brief, 'Twas deeply joyful.

John, by Tudor taught
Love's language and in heart-philosophy
Grown wise through suffering witnessed and endured,
Wooed his wife's spirit, tamed its fancies coy,
And made his proud plans to her intellect
Pay tribute of respectful confidence.
Call it not condescension that he stayed
Invention on its chafing, eager wing,
Till she was ready to speed on the flight.
Her counsel and perception keen were lent
To his instructed energy, whose power
Sustained her timid thought in giving forth
Suggestion, grace, embellishment to his.

How rich was their communion! how love filled Their home with gladness, and their mother's heart With peace whose light was as the mellow beams That flood fair harvest days!

Those happy hours Alas! how brief, when having to their arms Clasped a new life called by the sacred name

Clasped a new life called by the sacred name Of Daughter, they beheld it day by day Unfold in mind and stature.

Ere this bud

Expanded in youth's fulness, sudden drooped The mother-roses, one by frosts of Age Lightly but surely smitten, one by touch Of some mysterious agent, cast to earth. Since then, a score of sober years have gone."

"This latest flower still sheds upon John's home Its influence, let me hope. For scarce I deem You paint an idle myth."

"Then know," said Ben,
"This daughter lives and of the long-lost wife
John sees in her the image, hears the tones
Repeated amid scenes they once made glad.

'Twas by fresh springs of filial love revived,
His fainting courage took on strength anew,
And 'twas a daughter's zealous thought prepared
By youthful discipline, that trained and warmed
His spreading aspirations, till they bore
The ripened clusters of assured success.

Here rests the story—lay it on the shelf
Among your odd collections, to be bound
And numbered later, should you chance to find
Its full relations, and the place it fits.
Yet first set these notations at its close:
Solos are good in music, when one soul
Sings forth to others what it solely feels;
But for high themes touching the general hopes
And grand advances of Humanity,
And for full worship and adoring praise,
All clefs must blend.

The bass, though deep and strong, Is not enough; it lacks the power to soar. You comprehend?

I mean, dear Tom, we men In great attempts, need woman at our side. In all the world's uplifting and reforms, Her part is vital. For Time's triumph chants We want sopranos, every part indeed— Altos and tenors helping.

Hark! my child—She must have entered, and beguiles the hour, Thinking me absent.

From this window lean. She's on the lower balcony, we'll catch Her tones that float on evening's quiet breath!

THE DAUGHTER'S SONG.

DEPARTED.

FORTH in the pure twilight air I wander lone and in sadness,

Desolate are my steps toward the marge of the once glad river;

Charming no more to my soul are now the visions of nature.

Thou, who wast light to my heart! art thou departed forever,

Leaving my life gloom-veiled, that bliss may illumine another?

Seemeth the river-wave to sing me a sorrowful sonnet.

Seemeth an evening bird concealed in you evergreen branches,

Reading my secret woe, the dream of no human diviner, Sudden, in one wild strain, to sing thee departed forever.

We listened till the clear sweet minor tones Were silent, then we rose and grouped our way Along the stairs and hall-way to the room Where supper waited.

"You must tarry, Tom, Till Lord's day morning, in whose hallowed beams We'll go to worship at our woodland church," Ben said, ere from the hall his queenly child Received us.

As he placed her hand in mine, And called her Isabella, I was stilled, And fell to musing.

Not till thanks were said, And the brown damsel of the chimney-place,

She who had hung the corn-ears in our sight, Had carved the Indian loaf, and heaped our plates With steaming food leguminous, well-flanked With savory salad, could my brain discern That all around was but a real scene, And not a vision.

I was blithe to see

Susan, the wood-nympth of the rural school Before me face to face, a "frequent guest And friend congenial" of my hostess fair, They told me.

Soon we ancients merrily

Bandied our playful speeches, till our talk
Took on solidity. There was no need
For vapid chatterings. Isabella chose
Her questions wisely, and the younger girl
Naive, artless, reverent, the grace betrayed
Of a rare nature eager to be taught,
Intuitive of wisdom, and of taste
Unspoiled and delicate. Each maiden seemed
The other's complement. The elder one
In dignity and knowledge, as in height
Of frame excelled; Susan still bore the charm
Of early youth, its winsomeness, its glee.

Some tales of college seasons were recalled Above our fragrant cups of guileless cheer, And toasts proposed were pledged in sparkling draughts From mountain-springs, where-at the host enquired "Perchance, friend Tom, you miss the vineyard's blood Frenzied to wine? But 'tis debarred our board. We yield that privilege of luxury For higher privilege to take away Occasion of offence from wavering souls."

Joyous I answered, "Friends, I am not bound To wine's indulgence, nor to somnial fumes Nicotian; ye have taken not my gods In your denials. Proud am I to see This home-tent pitched within the promised land Of freedom from those idol-thralls of sense,—
The land whose borders have begun to rise Before our trammelled race, a land where Mind Makes Appetite the servant of the brain."
"Pledge to the gallant champion of home's peace And native clime's new freedom!" Bella cried, And the clear bell-toned glasses rang accord To silvery maiden laughter innocent.

At close of our repast, to Ben I spoke—
"I've found some views from life to suit the tale

We know of, and a niche the volume fits."
A swift ray glinted from his deep-browed eyes
Toward his fair daughter, as he shyly said,
"Then bind the pictures with the humble leaves,
And set the book amid memorial tomes.
I trust the volume will be strongly clasped."
"You gave the keeping of the leaves to me,"
I cried; "then ask not to control their clasps,
There may be that among them that shall serve
And gladden loving eyes in years to come,
I will translate your silence, spite your frown,
As saying, I will trust your conscience, Tom."

CANTO IX.

AFTER THE MISTS.

THAT night the rustling boughs stirred by fresh gales. Whispered a thousand fancies to my brain.

Again I saw my Benjamin in youth Wave cheerily at Alma Mater's gates
The parting hand; then saw him culturing
His natal fields; or bent with arduous thought;
Or lifting his wide brow when o'er it stole
Gleams of Invention's triumphs.

I recalled

His gentle songs,—did they not signify
The story of his life? Was he not John?
Did not his Isabella bear the name
And sing the melodies to Della's groves
Familiar, where her mother lived and loved,
Whom Tudor wooed as maid, and Ben espoused?

How thin his riddles proved by morning light! And ah! the child of love refined by pain,

Who welcomed us at early time of prayer, In full and beauteous maiden-womanhood—Was one the secret of whose heart surprised My idle consciousness, long seasons gone, On Plymouth coast, where a wood meets the sea. Her eyes, whose tender luster shines serene As planet's from sky-depths, once unawares Transfixed mine with their glitter of despair, What time they turned from an out-sailing ship Fast gliding o'er the far horizon's bound! Her soul, a fount of worship new and praise, Had hidden its anguish, like a wounded dove, That pierced mid joyous flight by wanton dart, Flutters in quivering silence down the sky, To hide its torn breast 'neath a covert sedge.

Oft had I wondered if that girl-dove's hurt
Was unto death, or if inherent strength
Had re-inforced her heart; if balm of hope
Had healed the breast that might ne'er lose its scar.
Now after years, she wears no lover's name,
Yet melancholy shades not eye or brow,
Nor dims reflectively her father's smile.

But there was pathos in her voice that filled The woodland chapel, or melodious soared Amid its arches framed of forest boughs; While Ben's deft fingers ruled the organ's breath, And the fresh voices of a hamlet choir Sang the full chorus: "Christ the conqueror, lives."

The morning lessons ended, notes of praise Pealed forth again—deep basso, tenor sweet, Rich alto, and our clear soprano sang Of God's high sovereign glory; and this theme Rang in our spirits through the soft, low prayer Of benediction, and seemed e'en to fill The woods and skies around our homeward path.

HAIL SOVEREIGNTY DIVINE.

HYMN.

Hail Sovereignty Divine! whose glory's blaze
To blindness smites the proud revolted gaze;
Or, seen through doubt's refracting lurid mist,
Is a destroying fire, whence terrors dart—
With sight made clear to see Thee as Thou art,
We hail Thy truth and might, by which all things consist.

Hail, Sovereign Will! that mindest to make free
A race, self-bound, and lift them up to Thee,
Thou art Earth's Rest, and Heaven's immortal Theme,
From Thee discentred, thoughts to chaos tend,
Thou art Law's origin, support, and end,
Hail, Sovereign Will! Hail, Mind of Love supreme!

CANTO X.

DOÑA AND ISABELLA BY THE LAKE.

WHILE autumn smiling wore her festal robes, Often I traced the paths to Ben's abode. Was he ensconced 'mid books and instruments, With Science têté-à-tête, soliciting Her confidence, as favorite preferred, I sent no greeting to his airy shop.

Yet seldom were my footsteps soon returned, Since Isabella would invite my stay To share the noon-repast.

Her father then Would join us, and, at times, propose with me To take a mountain-ramble, till the dusk.

Ere noon the freedom of the library Was mine with all its treasuries, its store Of influence magnetic from charged brains Evolved t' invigorate the faculties, Or with volts of strong thought to stimulate Convictions.

Isabella oft would say
"Our house demands the grace of silvery locks,
And friendly feet make echoes sweet to hear."

Sometimes, bearing her easel and guitar, I walked beside her to a lakelet's beach, Making the timid wildfowl swiftly dart Toward their green shelters, as we took our seats On logs or mossy boulders, thence to scan Some scene for copy, and to greet the sound Of Susan's light step, when, the school-work done, She, too, might come.

Perchance we three then climbed By a steep pathway, to a rugged peak That overlooked the village of my inn. There Isabella sketched a farm-house red And woman at the well-sweep by its door Gazing, with eyes hand-shaded from the sun, Adown the rustic lane, as if in hope A guest drew near.

She most loved scenes Where human life has part, saying: "For me

A picture lacks completeness, wherein nought Seems conscious of existence. I'd depict Some fellow-being 'mid my rocks and trees; Or, at the least, set some brute creature there, Or give my skies a flying bird or two."

One day we sat beside the lake. She sketched, While I discoursed of young days spent with Ben—A theme that ever yielded joy to both.

Lo! from a leafy copse emerged a pair
Ten yards at right—a tall and slender man,
A dark-eyed woman with rich beauty dowered;
James Dunbar's wife, and the slim Tenor they.
Scarce granting us the notice of a glance,
They lightly sprang upon a tiny skiff,
And shot far outward o'er the placid flood.

"Pray, Guardian Mentor!" Isabella cried— For thus she styled her venerable knight— "Know you these favoring mortals hasting forth To fill a void that made my picture poor? See now! they rest their oars, and see, I mark Their outlines midway of my canvass."

Hark!

Swift footsteps, clamoring childish tongues "Mamma!

Come back, Mamma!" And as soft echoes cry "Come back, Mamma!" six little feet impress The clayey beach, six chubby arms are waved Toward the gay boatlet, and the Doña's voice Ripples in silvery laughter toward the shore;

"Ho! Lucia, Jamie, Philip, I go home,
I sail afar to beautiful Brazil."
But when the children shrieked and sobbed aloud,
"Mamma! Mamma! O do not go away—
We'll be Brazilians, we will all be good "—
"I come, my children" rang the Doña's voice
Sweet as a song-bird's of Castilian groves.
The boatlet glided swiftly to the strand,
Where the bright matron kissed each tear-stained cheek,
Till rainbow smiles succeeded stormy tears.
The storm retiring sought the Tenor's brow,
As moodily he cast him on the beach
To wait the "Princess's" pleasure.

She was fain

To gaze on Isabella shyly with amaze, Admiring her fine stature, chiselled brows, And speaking eyes, that with a wondrous light Fell on young James, the Doña's eldest boy, Whose name, whose eyes of blue, and sunny locks Were all paternal copies.

"I am James,"

He said, as Bella rose to greet the group,
"And this is Philip; this is Baby Lu—
Such little things! But I am tall and eight!
This is Mamma: my Papa's name is James—
James Dunbar. He has such great boats at sea!"

Dear Isabella! now had come thine hour Of comprehension full. In the fair prime Of thy life's morning, thou didst feel the touch Cold, hard, and deathly of the unyielding Nay Of thine existence stealing round thy heart; And now it meets thee at thy rising noon, With mocking smiles defiant.

Hast thou proved A Yea whose strength and worth are grand enough To match this Nay and thy heart's peace defend?

Where stands thy Yea? Not in thy hoary knight Already glancing toward the western heavens, To question as an hireling of day's end. Thy father? Canst thou set his closing days

Against these children's years, his autumn's rays Against a long bright summer fellowship?

My own heart-scars seemed opening, as I saw The pallor steal o'er Isabella's cheek. Rising, I took her quivering hand in mine, And forced my cleaving tongue to spare her own, By speaking for her.

Was not I alone

The sharer of her heart's deep mystery? Perhaps her shielding Angel had decreed To lead me toward her in her crucial hours.

There have been secret burials where men stood By those who in their anguish dared not sigh— Stood with averted look and mirthful eye, Though trembling with unuttered sympathy. Thus I stood veiling Isabella's part With flimsy curtains of fantastic speech, Till she had stilled her heart-throbs, ruled her tones; Aye, curbed, as was her wont, her patient soul.

"See, Mamma! pretty picture!" Philip shouts, Brown-curled and roguish, spying Bella's sketch; And "Mamma! will'oo make zish mushic shing?" Piped Baby Lucia, dragging from its case Bella's guitar.

The Doña blushing chid The babe so like her, with its rosy bloom, Pearl teeth, and brilliant eyes.

One saw how looked The rose at budding-stage, and what would be The fulness of the bud well-blown, as rose.

The baby's wish was wisdom to us all.
Kind Isabella tuned the loosened strings;
The mother smote them, and with pensive grace,
Sang tenderly a song of heart and home.

THE DOÑA'S SONG.

Tall are the boughs of stately trees,
In our South clime of wonder,
Above them on the mountain-breeze,
The eagle and the condor
Float from their eyries far and high,
Where peaks of Andes hold

The first dawn-rays that cheer the sky,
The eve's last beams of gold;
Yet jessamines and roses spring
In gentle vales, where thrushes sing.

My lover's race sailed forth of yore,
By unknown seas undaunted,
Till boldly on the New World's shore,
Their Lisbon banners flaunted.
His soul was with like daring led,
His eyes like zeal expressing,
On mine Love's spell enchanting shed,
Their glance his love confessing.
Alas! they never more unclose,
He wakes not from his long repose.

Sweet Lusitanian songs he sang
Chimed with the Napo's rushing,
As toward broad Amazon it sprang,
From crag-born fountains gushing,
Speeding in swiftness, like the hours
When Caspar sat beside me
Mid fragrance rich from balsam bowers—
Ah! now what woes betide me!
Where Napo's ceaseless torrent falls,
Deserted are my Caspar's halls.

Chill are the northern everglades
Where songsters faintly warble,
And hearts are chiller than their shades,
Aye, cold and chill as marble.
My heart is pining for its home,
For evermore a rover;
Nor more beneath the starry dome,
Shall I behold my lover.
Farewell! ye palms of Napo's dell,
And, Caspar, vanished love, farewell!

The baby slept upon her nurse's arm—
The Spanish nurse, dark Lena, whose soft eyes
Dropped tears, her lover, mayhap, being dead.
Jamie and Philip from beside her culled
Smooth pebbles, James to cast them in the lake,
Philip to build, he said, "a great, high house."
Sir Tenor praised the "Princess" and her song
With melting looks, then stole the dark guitar,
Thrumming its strings and humming, as to show
He, too, might sing,

The Doña lacked the taste For tenor, then, she had no eyes, nor ears That moment, save for Bella.

"Sing me, pray,

Some favorite lay. I have surprise to see A Señorita of this northern land In open air to sit with her guitar! She sings not Love. She sings, I must believe. 'Tis duty to be wise and read large books. My husband is of the New England coast; He tells the virtues of his country's wives." She gravely spoke, and ended with a sigh. Graciously Bella sought the dark guitar, And bending closely o'er it said, "I, too, Sing oft of Love; I sing my mother's songs. You shall hear one that pleased her husband well, When tired of clashing wheels, and clanging bars. Or voices resonant of rudest force. He turned at eve by his home hearth to meet His wife's true welcome, and his babe's glad smile."

THE WAITING WIFE.

What shall I do, Love, the long, lonely day Without thee? Shall I stray With the throng down yon city highway? That were lonely for me; For I want to see thee, Love—Not crowds, Love, but thee.

Shall I then stay in this cosy home-nook, Oft thy haunt? Shall I look
For content, in some favorite book?
'Twill not come thence to me;
For I want to read thee, Love;
Not books, Love, but thee.

Strings thou hast tuned shall I wake, and repeat Strains I learned at thy feet?
Nay; too sad were those melodies sweet
Chanted only by me.
Love, I'd sing but with thee;
Not alone—but with thee.

Let the day speed, for its darkness is great, Wanting thee, and I wait
As for light, thine approach, be not late,
Come at first stars to me.
O I yearn not for worlds,
But for thee, Love, for thee.

Doña's slight jewelled hand concealed her brow; Yet scarcely could a web of sheerest lace Absorb the glistening drops she fain would hide. But as her group departed, her soft palm Pressed ours, then resting on her elder boy's, Sought not the Tenor's arm.

"Let me yet hear This lovely voice," she cried, "and learn to sing, Though weakly, the sweet lays thy mother sang. These glades are not so chilly as I dreamed"

CANTO XI.

AFTER FIVE YEARS. SEEKING SOUL-GEMS.
JAMES DUNBAR'S STORY. CROESUS
AND SUSAN. VICTOR'S WORK.
ABOUT TO REVISIT BEN.

FIVE years have sped, since near my world-famed friend,

My broad-brained Ben, I spent mid Hampshire hills, A glad September, meeting oft his child, The queenly Isabella.

Since those days,
From actual scenes each year through wintry months,
They've studied city life among the poor.
Dear Benjamin in an o'ercrowded ward
Of our Metropolis has sought mid men
The sources of prevailing misery, and means
For remedy; while Isabel from streets
Polluted to the eye of sense and soul,
Has gathered a few scores of little ones,
And o'er them set the gentlest of her sex

To lift them out from squalor and neglect—Great Froebel's teachings being guiding lights To rule her course.

These poor unfostered babes Stretched gladly toward her their confiding hands, And now are taught to note God's handiwork, And put their tiny faculties to use. Cleanliness, order, gentleness they learn, And sense of brotherhood toward all their mates.

The sun-like sphere teaching of God; the cube—Sign of the earth and all things mineral;
The cylinder—an emblem of all life;—Were Froebel's symbol "Gifts," whereby young hands May reach, with all the zest of childish play,
The borders of fair Industry's domains,
And tender thoughts at infant pace advance
Within Truth's beams, there to expand toward Heaven,
Fed duly from the written Word sincere;
While Music, favorite pastime of the skies,
Her influence toward life's good beginning lends.

These "Gifts," these methods were the chosen aids Of Isabella, as her infant ranks She led along Instruction's flowery paths. And now when August smiles on Hampshire hills, She gives them summer welcome to Ben's home, His heart being warm toward babes.

Now at my side,

Upon the table where a few old books—
Rare fountains whence refreshing streams have sprung
To lift the heads of those who nobly strive—
Are handy for my use, her letter lies.
She writes, my blossom of the ages writes:
"We're at the old Home, a fine folding-place
For all my lambs.

O how they frisk by day

In our wide fields! and how at feeding-time
They crowd and caper to obey my call!
'Tis a strange joy to watch their pretty heads
Resting at night upon their little cots
In our quaint chambers, where the gay bouquets
Upon the paper-hangings seem prepared
For just this festival of childish bliss.
Their colors never looked so bright before,
Perhaps because we shut the sunlight out
In those long seasons when no child's voice sang
Through our lone corridors and quiet halls.

Dear father's grown so gay he's quite a boy

Among the children, in their twilight games. Sometimes I think he's ceasing to form schemes For binding forces of the elements
In bands material, for the aid of men,
And studies how to gird the lively powers
Of young Humanity for progress true,
And uses pleasing to the Lord of all.
We have great joy, and every day abounds
In peace, yet miss our helper and dear friend.
We wish your counsels farther, having framed
Your former wise suggestions into deeds."

I'll go; for now my children home returned From August wandr'ings, will supply my place To those who from close city tenements Watch, wistful for my frequent ministries, My sons in public councils, too, will sit, And bear our part not meanly in the gate.

This eve, as from my window I o'erlook
The stateliest of our city avenues, with park
Of garden verdure stretching toward the east,
Where rich and poor may meet, and where the glad
May gaily rove, the grave retire apart—
I hear the pattering of countless feet,

And see keen lights electric mock the stars That hang above them.

Let my eyelids close, While Revery brings the scenes that five years since Marked the September's close.

James Dunbar's wife Loved Isabella for her gracious mien And gift of song, when first beside the lake They met, and sang each to one soft guitar. Three times his Doña sought the maiden there, And found her not.

Three times I sought Ben's home And missed her presence, "She is tired," he said.

'Twas strange James Dunbar three times crossed my path

Within the forest. Twice he questioned me
Of the Inventor's daughter skilled in art,
And sweet in song; then lured me at the last,
To sit beside him on a grassy slope,
And scan an Indian arrow he had found.
Then plucking grass-spires with a nervous hand,
He talked of failures to be wise in youth,

And murmured he was tired of foreign ways And foolish brains.

I marked his face was lined About the brows, and that his frequent laugh Lacked the clear ring of hearty merriment. "I've won some prizes in my time," said he, "And left my rivals sighing in the rear When I went racing—there's delight in that, 'All's fair in love and war' has been my rule."

I dropped forth altruistic thoughts, to sound His nature. They touched bottom speedily. "Years since," he told me, "my will wavered much Between ambition and that carefulness Which turns aside at every feather's point Opposed to straight-lined sanctity.

"Perchance,"

I questioned, "there were those esteemed For earnest purpose toward strict rectitude, Who lured you toward them on that prudent way Which seems, 'tis true, to turn aside from gain, Yet in its progress, on a clearer view, Tends ever with directness to content." "'Tis true," he cried, "you've strangely touched a string That vibrates latterly at slightest breath.

I loved a woman once, or feared I loved,
Who would have brought my proudest aims to halt,
Had I not stopped to reckon costs betimes.
Lately I dreamed—no; I'll be candid, sir—
I saw her yesterday up yonder crag.
You see "—and here he laughed—"I learned as boy,
To trace a song-bird through the densest shades
That e'er held nests, or on the loftiest boughs,
And I'd been tracking her day after day."
"Our Isabella!" this with anger I.
He laughed again. "Judge not so harshly, sir.
'Tis over; and I think the woman's mind
Will prove her kingdom. I quite missed my chance
Of ruling there.

I breathed her well-known name, And clasped her hand. She reeled and paled, Nor spoke a word, till half my tale was told— No matter what the import of my speech.

She needed not to wave me from her side,
Nor read me o'er with tremulous bloodless lips,
A lesson on the sanctity of bonds
Whose hold she's free from; or extol my sons
And toddling babe above all worldly gifts.
The woman would persuade me I am walled

Within an Eden, with my little flock, And that 't were treason to send forth one glance Beyond its pale, and blasphemy to ask Is Life worth living to the best of us.

I had not counted to surprise her thus, In truth, I missed my wife that morn, and deemed She had pursued the singer to her haunts— My wife, a foreign lady spoiled by praise, A toy I fancied, paying dearest price."

"A beauteous creature with a heart of worth. I've seen her, Captain, with her infant train—Rare group! Now bear a word from elder lips, This is your hour of power.

Hold fast your prize—
A wife's love trembling in the balance now
'Twixt doubt and trust. Drink pure affection's draughts
From your home-wells, by tenderness made deep,
By loyalty defended; like those founts
Digged by the Hebrews in the chosen land,
And left to children's children sacredly
As priceless boons.

Conjure not vanished dreams From the past's tomb. Reality now deals

With thee and thine, and shall demand with force Imperative her dues, in waiting years."
He listened, but with melancholy frown
Which vexed my heart, that yearning o'er him, strove
To fathom his resolve.

"Too late," he said While dawned his scornful smile, "too late for me To tread those narrow, beaten, ancient paths That pleased your youth.

What have you ever known Of grand, aspiring, daring enterprise? I have, Sir, that at stake in old Brazil That shall surprise a world, with glory won, Can I but make it sure.

One point attained,
One little point, and I could find content,
Were there contentment in a sphere like this—
Too scant for joy."

"And if you fail, my son,"

I pleaded, "be no cynic. I may speak
As a reviewer of men's ways, no doubt;

It may be, too, from deeper processes

Of feeling, strife within more passionate, And spiritual tumults more confused and wild, Than seems potential from your point of thought. Be no 'Timon of Athens' indiscreet, While free to act as impulse may propose, Yet wanting just discrimination; fierce, Implacable, when thwarted by constraint, And shorn of homage.

Braver 'tis to bear

All life's vicissitudes with changeless will,
Discerning things unchangeable that hide,
And yet abide above us and around.
By the intents you cherish estimate
Your worth, and never reckon lost the act
Of virtue born, that seemed to miss its goal,
Weigh not your life by gains exterior.
Write that Success which reaches usefulnes,
That Failure, which leaves human welfare less."

His look was softer, as we turned apart To meet not since.

He sailed from Boston Bay Next day, they said, with wife and children three. Rumor now runs that from a dizzy height Of influence commercial, in the strifes And tumults of Brazilian state affairs, He late was hurled to penury, and fallen From rank political, now exiled roves, While citizens aver—"He never loved Our peace; but trafficked with our liberty."

Lately I met another who was guest
At Hampshire, five years since—the man of wealth,
Whose daughter Victor loved, but Julian base,
Whom first self-pride, then passion led astray—
Had snared, and her not sole of maidens fair.
'Twas in a mart of books I noticed him
Buying a dozen volumes of huge size,
And glittering covers.

By his bristling hair
Outstanding from his crown, and straight, broad shape,
I knew the man, who, as he spied me, cried,
"Halloo! well met, sir! So you are not dead."
"You, too, my friend," I answered, "cling to life,
And find it, I hope, happier than when last
We met high in the Hampshire wilderness."

"Look, now," he whispered cautiously, "my girl Went from us wilful, strong, and beautiful. We brought her back a shadow weak and wan, To die with broken heart.

When our own hearts
Were breaking—dawn, you know, comes close on night—
My Ned went floundering in a sea of love
After the mistress of a country-school,
A poor girl, but as good as she is fair;
With sense and wit, although she's scholarly.
The boy left trifling, married her, and turned
Again to books.

'Father,' says she to me,
'Good books are tables clean, whereon the wise
Have set well-seasoned wholesome food, or choice
And nourishing dainties for our hungry minds
That, unless fed, turn weaklings, or go wild.
Some minds mayhap find nurture for themselves,
But most of us—like Ned, here, must have books
Or living teachers.'

So I'm buying books For these our children—Edward and his bride. We change, Sir, in our thinking, now and then."

[&]quot;But will your son seek to digest his lore Through exercise of mental food acquired? And will he share his pabulum of thought With starving minds?" I said.

"Talk common sense," Laughing he plead, "I don't know Latin yet; Though wife and I have started to grow learned With listening to our youngsters."

"Pardon then,"

I answered, "I but ask if they will place
Their learning to good purpose, and provide
That some less-favored than themselves may learn."
"You've hit the nail, Sir, squarely on the head,"
He cried, and clapped my shoulder heartily,
"But here comes Susan, my son Edward's wife;
She'll tell you for herself what schemes and plots
She's laid to trap our pockets and our wits,
And make the poor laugh.

Susie, here's the Judge I met one summer in your native town."

The little lady bright-haired and sweet faced Turned her blue eyes upon me, and we smiled In joyous recognition. Bella's friend, The gentle wood nymph of the Hampshire school Was now the Crœsus' daughter!

Well-a-day!

Her "schemes and plots" from Bella take their cue,

And favor city children and sad youths
Pining for knowledge, knowing not their lack,
Thus she declared, and said, with tender eyes,
"My Edward's heart is bent upon our plans—
A heart far richer than my own deserves;
And father here indulges us in all.
I've found a father and a mother, sir,
Long orphaned. Ought not I, of all the world,
Divide my good with those who are deprived?"

Yes, I will haste to Ben. 'Tis sweet to hope The morrow's eve will find us face to face, Ho! give me lights.

And now my study beams With cheerful radiance. Soon my precious sons Will come to greet me.

I will feast my eyes
Till then, on this fair marble, their last gift,
Victor's own work, expressing Benefit—
Not Vengeance.

'Tis well named "The Swimmer's Prize."
A stalwart swimmer muscular and tall,
With sea-drops trickling o'er his valiant brow,

Grasps with right hand a wave-dashed, storm-swept rock, With left uplifts a pale youth from the spray. The group is touched with colors.

Victor dares

Thus vivify his statues, choosing not To leave them death-like, because centuries Have robbed the Grecian relics of the hues They doubtless wore in all their wondrous prime.

"What! tears, my father?" cries my eldest born, Whose step I heard not—"Yes, son, tears of joy. This work of Victor, how it melts my heart! You boys outwit me with your pranks and tricks. Last year that sketch by Bella startled me On yonder wall—"The Smile of Heavenly Hope," Where light on one plain face, at the low door Of a poor cabin seemed to cast a beam Of cheer along a lonely woodland path. Now, rogues, you pelt me with this sculptured stone! "Tis well I can run far from you awhile. To Ben's protection.

Ah! what friends! what peace! What children! an old pilgrim may enjoy."

CANTO XII.

FEEDING THE LAMBS.

AT Ben's, his guest this score of happy days,
Now can I watch the river of his life
Broadening and brightening, as it flows to join
Th' eternal tides, greening the banks it laves.
Next week we go with Bella to the town,
Conducting her young flock, lambs, for Christ's sake
Led here to frisk and feed in pastures green,
Ere to their narrow lodgings in pent streets
Returned for winter life.

Still, in those homes
Her care and Susan's will benignly watch
And kindly guide them. From the Cræsus' hoard
By his loved son dispensed, and the wide purse
Of generous Benjamin enriched, these two
Will spread those wise expenditures that yield
Return some sixty, some an hundred fold
To all communities, where youthful feet
Are led devoutly to their proper place

With the world's husbandmen and builders— They who search out natural forces, and subdue All to men's service; or pass on earth's gifts Already furnished, to meet Need's quick grasp; Or those who, by long comtemplation, gain Brain potency to share with minds deprived. For this and like ends, for a sisterhood Hampered and sore distressed in city haunts. I'll join my favor and best aid to their's, Happy in age if I may claim a part In their glad counsels who plan human peace, And meditating on the law divine, Are found as trees by water-courses set, In leaf and fruit unfailing to the end. But is dear Isabella's fancy joined By fleeting motives to her present tasks? Or spring her deeds from radical intends Conditioned on her spirit's life, that grows And blossoms into aims benevolent?

I met her in my rambles yesterday, And bade her sit some moments in the shade, As guardians may command.

I challenged her

To paint me her vocation in clear words, As in her contemplation it stands forth. "It is, dear counsellor," she kindly said,
After a pause of revery, "to guard
And tend the young will, as it first expands
From Infancy's frail beauteous clay-rind,
Praying God's added re-creative touch
To wake to nobler life that understands
Himself with growing energy of love,
While aspirations, tendrils of the mind
Are trained to climb above their primal rests.
I long to tune young laughter to such keys
As shall with Duty's utterance harmonize,
In all the future's years.

I'd teach young souls
To feel a falsehood, by their sense of right,
And by allegiance early bound to Heaven,
Have no will left to worship or to serve
Heart-idols."

"You pursue a fond ideal, My child," I answered, sternly testing her, "Scarce guessing how the idol-cult prevails In lives most rich in outward benefits,"

"Lives may be rich in their due estimates Of benefits possessed, who yet seem poor Beside their neighbors, who are laden down With visible dower.

Perhaps," she said, "those prize Most heartily the fountain's crystal depths, Who may but pause to snatch a precious draught, Lest night descend on their bewildered march; And those most gladly hail the sun, who catch Only a few rays, through dull attic panes Struggling mid clustering roofs.

These might e'en guess The rapture of the Parsee, who adores Yon circling Light, whence each new day is born; Though others 'neath its equatorial beams Ignore it, worshipping a fetish clod.''

"I see, wise Isabella, you transcend
My hoary wisdom, with your woman's wit.
And, doubtless, you will teach most wittily,
Proving abstract ideas, with similes,
Make younglings greet with joy their country's flag,
Incipient patriots—through your bed-time tales,
And by their marbles set forth equity."

"Justice has simple rules," musing she spoke,

"A child may grasp all with his guileless thoughts."
"What! all?" I cried,

"Yes, all," she said and turned On me her eyes lucent with inner light. "Straight lines are shortest between points, and right In its first principles, to normal view Is clear. Do not complexity and doubt Come from false precepts mingled with the true?"

"Yet, dreamer, only after length of days,
Can your hoped harvests bless the hungry world.
Gather, I pray you, the fresh early fruits
That blush around you in your years of strength."
"Fear not, my gentle Guardian," she replied,
"That I shall fail of blessing, while I wait;
The day is come, when, dearer than all joy
That finds in self a centre, or affords
A solace solely for these fleeting hours,
I value Christ's permission—aye, command
To take my woman's place among the bands,
Who strive with zeal unwavering to uplift
Our race into the glory of His smile.

And yet I boast not to have lived exempt From idol-fascinations, that appeal To all in some fair guise.

I shudder oft

At soul-thralls witnessed round us, as one might, Who, having passed by night a fearful chasm In our Sierras, by a taper's ray Guided along its brink, returns at morn To gaze adown its mile of sheer descent, Quaking at horrors by a hair's breadth missed.

Yet poets praise idolatory, men talk Of idol-seeking, as of Heaven-pursuit!

I'll tell the questioning little ones such tales
Of idol-mischief, point such triumphs won
By moral valor, as shall warm young wills
To hold all things material under tax
For soul-promotion; nay—my words offend
My meaning. I will bind with fervor true
On holiest altars, in devotion glad,
My purpose and my deeds; yet know the fire
That fell on Carmel's stones, in Ahab's reign,
Must fall, else all my offerings will be vain."

"I praise you, child," I answered, "for your aims Against idolatry however masked. An idol lost, that still is loved and mourned, How in its place comes frantic suicide, Morose despair, or gloom insane to stand Beside the vacant throne!

An idol raised

Within a heart permits no purpose there
To thwart its vain control, though it be guised
As fond affection, or as angel fair.
Be it your privilege, with instinct keen,
By truthful revelations wisely chosen,
To guide the soul's unfoldings, the new gleams
Of curious reason to direct with awe
To Purity's white temple, that clear eyes
May see her perfect loveliness, and form
Their standard by this view.

Then, as soft feet

Pass on to opening life-paths, satyrs bold
Or sirens false can not hallucinate
Conscience or reason; if but Reverence
Of a pure Presence mindful of all thoughts
And waiting for communion with all souls
Be your ally."

"O fount of tenderness Forbearing, kind—maternal love! of thee

I drank in helpless years," my listener breathed Departing from my themes. "Thy sources deep In woman's nature rise, and from them spring Her pitying sympathy for all her race." "No, child," I cried, "permit my age to chide. Ascribe to thy mortality no wells Of sympathy perennial, which methinks Has elements divine.

Great Milton sang—
'Daughter of God and man, immortal Eve!'

And were I poet, thus would I express
My praise of women who have blessed my life."
She smiled. "But, Guardian, what unfathomed deeps
Are in the human soul!"

Responsive I

Related how a murderer wild and fell—
A prisoner half a century and more—
Twice nine years chained, at four-score years grew mild Calling "Dear Mother!" as his death drew near;
And how a youth's cry, in his dying hour
Rang in his mother's ears—"Forsake me not!"
She having failed to teach his hand to loose
Its grasp on her frail palm, to reach instead
The Hand whose touch gives immortality.

Alas! that Woman should presume so far As to retain the weight of a man's soul To her indulgence bound for anchorage, Where waves of an eternal sea may rise Upon Time's shallows.

"Yet 'tis true," she said, "That many a woman, e'en in this fair land, And countless more in realms beyond the seas, Are by exactors driven, by tyrants wronged, Tempted and starved because of cruel greed In pampered men of courteous mien, and state Respected and admired.

Mothers who toil And pine in closets dank, for little ones Who have no foot of the green, plenteous earth To stretch their growing limbs on, in their play; And maidens frail, untrained, unguarded, pressed With early cares come to my dreams in sleep.

A noble friend, who often threads dim streets In your proud city, seeking human gems Amid their slime, told me a woman once Holding a babe in arms, looked forth mid pools And sheds of refuse by dark tenements, And asked "Are you to get us a park here? I wish to God you would! We need it most." But much the friend is grieved because of those Who say, "We have not eaten aught to-day. Is there no work for us? We would earn bread," Who have nor tutored minds, nor skillful hands For useful labors that befit our sex. She longs to gather maidens by the scores, Set them in classes before matrons wise, And teach them such plain arts as homes demand; The needle's use, the management of babes, Food preparation, thrift, and gentle care Of those who languish with disease or pain—And so give efficacy to their cry For well-earned recompense.

Let me not crush

In woman or in child the noble wish
For worthy independence; but forestall instead
The chance of helplessness.

I am resolved

To join my humble ministry to theirs Who unloose heavy burdens, and raise hands That droop." "Dear child," I cried, "He who came down As Burden-bearer to the race of men, Who quenches not the smoking flax, nor breaks The bruiséd reed—can point you to success, Nor is there help beside.

Strive as we may,
To heal sad hearts, and lift the languid hands,
There will be those who turn away the ear,
From His voice saying "Heavy-laden ones,
Come unto Me and I will give you rest!"
But send that word and follow as He leads.
So shall you be Restorer of safe-paths,
Making waste places smile, and souls that starved
To sit at feasts transformed as royal sons,
And daughters of the King."

As thus we talked Sitting beside a sweet-brier hedge, a shout Of childish merriment resounded near.

Peeping above our fragrant battlement, We saw the children trooping toward their bower, Foremost was one called Allyn auburn-haired And rosy. Leaning on a stick he trod Right measuredly, with roguish eyes down-cast. Beneath his left arm were a pamphlet large, And an old battered plaque.

Beside him Ruth-

A tiny round-eyed child, bore with grave look
Her favorite toy—a mimic violin.
A beard of white from flimsy paper cut
Hid Allyn's dimpled chin, and my soft cap
Perching in wrinkles on his curly pate
Surprised our peering eyes.

The tiny Ruth

Feigned Isabella's stateliness of gait, Wearing on her brown head, a bit of gauze, Whose scarlet had adorned our tall brunette.

They climbed unsmiling on two rustic chairs, And spoke in borrowed tones of "this young flock," While peals of mirth and antics full of grace Attested approbation from their mates.

Then Allyn rising placed the pamphlet large Against a shrub, and made the broken plaque Rest o'er it, as an artist's canvass might Depend upon an easel.

"Children, hark!"

He cried, and waved his hand till silence reigned—"Your Garden Teacher will make melodies And sing a 'kinder'-song.

You must keep still, And those who listen best shall first stand near And look at the fine pictures she has made."

Then Ruth's small fingers smote on the toy-strings, And her sweet voice of silver piped a lay.

RUTH'S KINDER-GARTEN SONG.

IF you would make the corn grow,
You have to plant the seeds;
Soon you must hoe
By every row,
Or else there will be weeds:
And the sun must shine, the rain must fall,
Or you will get no corn at all.

You must not chase the mother-hen,
But give her drink and food,
And leave her then
Safe in her pen,
To raise her pretty brood.
She'll shortly teach them what to do,
And be a better nurse than you.

Our hands can only do their share
Of all that must be done,
But if we bear
Our part with care,
Others will help us on,
And God will send the sun and rain,
For growing children, birds, and grain.

"Ho! Ben, my boy," called Allyn in deep tone, Turning abruptly; as a seven year lad Wrapped in the folds of the Inventor's coat, And trailing it upon the grass, drew near, Ben's hat in hand, low bowing to the troop, And answering with assumed authority: "Come, Isabella, Tom, and little ones! Let's have a game or two upon the lawn, Till supper-time."

Here laughter rippling flowed Dissolving his droll soberness to fun.
Sweet Ruth sincere e'en in her play, looked on, While Allyn and the seven year lad enrobed Or tangled in Ben's luckless summer coat, Joined with their mates in gambols.

Suddenly

Dashed the maid Phyllis down npon their ranks, Like raven mid young dovelets—"O you rogues!" Panting she cried, "Give back the master's coat, And Judge's cap! Give back Miss Bella's sash—Or Mammy'll make no muffins for your tea."

She should have hidden her white teeth with her lips, And borrowed sternness—but forgot to chide, And joined her laughter to the general mirth, Holding her sides and shouting—"O you rogues!" And driving homeward all the little romps.

Then we who had been peering o'er the hedge, Took our own turn at laughing.

"What think you, O guardian Knight! of Comedy and Farce, Or e'en of Melody to Action joined? As native to our species?" Bella asked, "Action may serve Truth well; but let not Truth Transfer her scepter to the servant's hand," I answered. "Whatsoe'er upbuilds the mind, And qualifies our being for high deeds Is worthy; though in this there are degrees Of worth, and he who takes by choice the less, While greater is before him, is not wise. As for mere feigning, as a life-employ, To aid one's fellows to forgetfulness, And dissipation of their fairest wealth—

The priceless hours—methinks it must re-act Upon the feigner making him play false With conscience, duty, and all serious things. A mask wins not confiding sympathy, That so enriches the life-pilgrimage."

"All young things imitate, and thus afford A mirror to their elders," Bella said.

'The mimicry of children," I rejoined,
"Renews our youthful fancies, and makes
Gay our thought; while oft its exercise
Educes and makes strong their faculties.
'Tis not performance, artifice, or trick;
But nature's method.

Still it follows not

That mimicry should rob from Earnestness
The foreman's office in Life's busy shop,
Where men and women must do careful work,
Or harm uncounted interests.

A whim

Caught by an imitative baby boy From a weak mother, like a single mote In a bright eye, may trouble his soul's sight When he shall stand with statesmen and make laws, Till he shall veer back on the dial-plate
His country's sign; or make a man of lore
Lose step with all the progress of the age."

"Yes, Knight, and she who trains the little hands That when grown strong shall engine-levers move; Or e'en those fingers that shall soon forge wheels On which ride travellers daily, may make lives Secure, through her example of good work, Of faithfulness and patience in small things, Set before youthful eyes."

"You speak a word

Of wondrous sense—example.

Thence I draw

A present lesson. Your old knight perceives He strides too stiltedly for yonder lads To keep their twinkling feet in step with his. He'll try to dream himself a boy again, As Ben your father needs not, being still Boy-like, thus knowing a child's heart.

He's wise

To graduate his reasoning to young brains."

We walked now by the roadside toward the lawn, Whither the children had run frolicking With Phyllis at their heels, to sport as wont With the Inventor, ere their supper-call. A creaking wagon lumbering toward his house Here overtook us wending thither, too. It bore a laundry-dame, with baskets wide Teeming with children's garments, seeing which, Our Bella hastened through a by-path home, To summon nurses to bestow the robes As needful for their charges.

At my bow,

The laundry-woman pleased grew talkative. Checking her nag, with curious looks, she spoke: "You are Miss Bella's uncle, I've no doubt?"

"A friend, good Madam."

"Well, she's a nice girl,

Mister.

I've known her these ten years or more, And found her kind. I'm sorry she's alone On this great farm." "She has her father, Ma'am."

"But she's no husband," here she whipped a fly From her horse's flank, as he jogged at my gait— "It's a great shame."

She sighed and shook her head Sun-browned, with ribbons red strained on the breeze.

"You're married, doubtless, Madam, and have proved A husband's worth, through blest companionship?"
"I, married?" she returned with glance surprised,
"O yes. My husband has the rheumatiz
This seventeen year.

He gets out in the sun On pleasant days. We're trying some new herbs. 'Children?' Yes, I have eight. My oldest girl Married a drinking man; so she's come home With two fine babies. My next girl is lame, But good as any minister or saint. Jimmy ran off to sea. I lie awake When the wind roars at night, afraid he'll drown. If it was not for my eldest girls that stay At home, and the two babies, when the five Go off to school, I should be lonesomer Than any owl—without 'twas for my work.

You see I have to scrub, and wash, and mend, From morning candle-light, till long past dark. I tell you, Mister, such a family With a sick husband, keep my hands afly; But then, my cares are nothing to what some Bend under—

Here we are! and here she comes. A nice girl." In a whisper—"What a shame She has no husband!

Thank you, kindly, Sir, For helping me across this wheel. I weigh More than I used to, when I jumped a fence As nimbly as a ribbit.

Thank you, Sir."

'Tis evening. Isabella's voice was heard A half hour since, above us, murmuring A lullaby to her loved lambs.

Then all was still.

But now her feet draw nigh upon the stairs, And now beyond a drapery that hides Her father's presence and my own from hers, She charms our twilight silence with a song.

ISABELLA'S HEART-SONG.

My heart's a fountain springing,
Singing, upward flinging
Joyfully its spray;
How have earth-storms quelled and shadowed it in scornful fray!

But the tempest only swelled the sources Of its earnest happy forces, Till they hasted more triumphantly along their way.

As storm-clouds overflowing

Leave more glowing

Growing plants and flowers,

While the river chants fresh anthems in its woodland bowers;

So thy purposes, my heart! are purer
For thy pain, thy hopes are surer.

Life! thy nobler victories crown thy conflict laden hours.

CANTO XIII.

A FAIR VISION. A CLOUD-BURST. FIDELITY.

"TIS autumn late. My home-life is resumed In the great city; whither Ben has come With Isabella to their winter lodge Nearby my door.

Not far off Susan dwells In Crœsus' mansion with her Edward fond, And my loved sons are close at hand.

Of late

At Crœsus' bidding, we have often met Within his stately dwelling, to resolve And plan for the accomplishment of hopes Toward bettering the dismal ward, where live Bella's babe-pupils.

Edward wills to rear At willing Cræsus' charges, three strong blocks Inclosing pleasant courts in outer air, Where youths may sport, and weary elders rest,

While roofs shall give broad views and promenades. Within shall rooms be modelled for home-life In fair conditions, and there shall be halls For worship, lectures, books, and pastimes pure, With class-rooms for child learners, and for boys Trade shops, where skillful masters shall instruct The hand untrained.

Mothers and maidens, too, May find provision to become expert In fitting lore, and all the arts of home.

Not without woman's counsel, we devise, Dreading the dreariness and waste of schemes Wherein her quick perception has no part—But draw forth Susan's wit, and Bella's care For deft arrangements suited to all aims; While Crœsus' wife suggests economies Of space, and my sons' partners fair Suggest best contiguities, and hint Fit furnishings.

Victor once so disdained By Crœsus, has won favor in his eyes, And came to our last conclave, at my call, To lend artistic insight to our thought.

All's well, and we to-morrow shall give forth Our full requirements to an architect Apt to fulfil or wisely modify Our joint design.

But see, upon the street, There's tumult—I'll look forth.

Hark! sudden cries—
"Stop the assassin!" "Seize the murderer!"
"Beware the bomb!"—and what fierce notes are these:
"Down with the rich!" "Let Capital beware!"
Ah! now swift messengers press to my side
Stammering, "Cræsus by a villain's hand
Is dead within his home, his wounded son
Lies fainting there beside him. Go not forth,
There's rage against your children and yourself.
You have been tracked by anarchs envious,
Who say you're plotting foul monopolies,
To drain the life-blood of the trampled poor."

Alas! 'tis true still, as in ancient days,
That Jealousy is cruel as the grave.
Slain friend! who learned, though late, to serve mankind,
Who yearned to uplift the ignorant and give
The guilty time and privilege to change—
I mourn, thee, brother!

Patience dwelt in thee For the fierce poor. The laborer's lot was thine Through years of thrift; yet thou hadst hope to make The improvident wiser, better, happier. Must such as thou unflinchingly endure Thy neighbor's hate, waiting for his proud soul To learn obedience to God's will, and grow Forbearing; while he heeds not thy heart's pain. And scorns to wait for thy soul to unfold In knowledge and fraternal kindliness? Fair vision of Philanthropy! that rose Before our earnest souls—those happy halls Whence children of the needy should go forth Redeemed from want, equipped for life's career— Must thou dissolve, while we, who mourn the dead Lose heart and shrivel to indifference? Such questionings oppressed my sinking heart Beneath my study's evening rays, when Ben-With thoughtful Victor, silent at his side— Came striding in with firm and bouyant step, Beaming on me the luster of an eye Undimmed by disappointment.

"Tom! dear boy," He said with mellowed voice, "'tis bad, but worse Might have befallen us, for Edward lives. Our Bella is with Susan, and reports
His wound may heal in time. This mercy helps
His mother and young wife. Victor's strong soul
Is ours in fellowship: his energies
Are roused and chafe for noblest exercise.
Then hand in hand we sat, and long I spoke
Of the departed; of his kindling hopes
Cruelly quenched; of my despairings dark
Succeeding brightest dreams of helpfulness
Toward those whose fury, like a whirling flood,
Strands now our fair ambitions."

"Hold!" cried Ben,

"Thou'rt small of strength, if in adversity
Thou faintest. We must flag not in our zest
To serve our generation by God's will.
There's promise for our race. We must press on
To conquest. 'Tis not ours to choose a course
Across the wilderness. There'll be a cloud
For that by day, by night a fiery sign.
He who conducts the march, judges the poor,
And for the meek argues with equity.
Until in all the earth justice is crowned,
Christ fails not, nor lacks courage. Righteousness
Girdles His loins, and faithfulness His heart.

May be God wills not that we few shall wield Wealth's sceptre freely. In monopolies, E'en for philanthropy, dangers of pride Or power may lurk. We have time thrust on us For prudence, as for patience; not for waste. Let us watch well our course, and weigh all means In balances of righteousness, beware Lest one dishonest method, or one wedge Of gain held through oppression falsely wear The sign of mercy.

We must bear scorn well, Win reasoning minds, use present aids, and look For helpers from the common ranks of men. Good will is more than riches, thought than things, Teachers are above school-rooms, and the ends We seek must come through faithful ministries.

I have a picture in my spirit's eye,
That cheers me. I will paint for you in words
A vision of Fidelity, convinced,
Your insight shall discern what my faint rhythm
Can but suggest—what valorous holy strength
What glorious ardor in the subject dwells,
Whereby our hearts should quicken and be strong:

"With the tread of a warrior Fidelity goes
Clad in armor of mail,
His resolved brow is pale,
He has firmly set lips, and there glows
In his eye softly bright
Love's unquenchable light.

"A thousand keen archers have shot at his form. But his bow still is strong; He has warred in fierce battles, faced many a storm, And he bears scarce one treasure along. But a strong unseen Angel behind him; I'm weening, A burden of trophies is steadily gleaning From numberless fields:-There are Israel's marred shields. There's a branch from Moriah's lone wood, Where with Abram Fidelity stood By the dearly loved lad; There are mantles the old prophets had, Joseph's robe, Moses' rod, Daniel's necklace of gold, David's harp, the sweet balm Mary brought, With a tent-cloth by Paul's fingers wrought, And goods of the martyrs of old. There are patriot-swords blood-encrusted, Robes fond, patient women have made,

Gold once to the needy entrusted,
And all with due increase repaid,
Worn implements guided by hands scorched and failing,
Thus made for the rescue of many availing,
And flowers young disciples who dared to be true,
Have strewn in Christ's path, where the blossoms were
few.

"With the tread of a warrior Fidelity goes,
And I mark where his iron-shod feet
Have tracked the broad desert the bright springing rose
Makes all that drear wilderness sweet.
He shuns the gay dwellings of ease, and I know
For the joy set before him, to death would he go.
He passes in shade; but afar I behold
His tall helmet gleam in the splendor of gold.

"How stately the vision! I long to pursue,
While the diligent Angel who garners the spoils
From out the wide fields where Fidelity toils,
Turns whispering, 'What may I gather from you!'"

Ben ceased, and after pause spoke Victor, "Thanks For this portrayal.

Would my hand could carve This warrior-image from the lasting rock!

But more I long to set it forth in life,
With steady action and a constant will,
Mid scorn or favor, as all souls have done
Who have wrought progress, or o'er mastered wrong''
"Amen!" we elders said, deeming his words
Prophetic of exploits sublime.

Anew

Our courage rose to be of those who dare Embrace the promise whose fulfilment waits Afar, who guage the near and tangible By the unseen eternal, and endure As seeing Him who is invisible.

THE END.









